

R. England. Divine Assembly of 1711
A
BODY of DIVINITY:

Wherein the

DOCTRINES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Are EXPLAINED and DEFENDED.

BEING THE

Substance of several LECTURES

ON

The Assembly's Larger Catechism.

By *THOMAS RIDGLEY.*

In Two VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

Printed for DANIEL MIDWINTER, and AARON WARD, at the *King's-Arms*,
and JOHN OSWALD, at the *Rose and Crown*, in *Little-Britain*; and RICHARD
HETT, at the *Bible and Crown* in the *Poultry*.

MDCCXXXI.



DOCTOR PREFACE



...of men in
...the part of their temper
...very little
...or defend
...should not
...much longer it
...consideration would
...deal of
...had it not
...any other
...of providence
...of the great
...is the
...the me-
...and
...the
...depend upon them
...of the divine nature
...were new and
...by
...of the danger of
...it
...our preaching would be vain
...and we should be found like
...which would be a most
...And if this person
...nothing to
...I took the
...should be
...than an
...any farther
...well as
...to encourage

W W



T H E

P R E F A C E.

TH E Influence which the different sentiments of men, in matters of religion, have, for the most part, on their temper and behaviour towards one another, affords very little ground to expect that any attempt to explain or defend the most important doctrines of Christianity, should not be treated with dislike and opposition by some, how much soever it may afford matter of conviction to others. This consideration would have put a stop to my pen, and thereby saved me a great deal of fatigue, in preparing and publishing the following sheets, had it not been over-balanced by what I cannot, at present, think any other than a sense of duty, in compliance with the call of providence. I heartily wish there were no occasion to vindicate some of the great doctrines of the gospel, which were more generally received in the last age, than at present, from misrepresentation, as though the method in which they have been explain'd led to licentiousness, and the doctrines themselves, especially those of *Election*, *particular Redemption*, *efficacious Grace*, and some others, that depend upon them, were inconsistent with the moral perfections of the divine nature: These are now traduced by many, as though they were new and strange doctrines, not founded on scripture, nor to be maintained by any just methods of reasoning deduced from it, or as if the duties of practical religion could not be inculcated consistently therewith. If this insinuation were true, our preaching would be vain, our hope also vain, and we should be found false witnesses for God, and have no solid ground whereon to set our feet, which would be a most tremendous thought. And, if this be not sufficient to justify my present undertaking, I have nothing to alledge of equal weight.

I must confess, that when I took the first step, in order to the setting this design on foot, by consenting that Proposals should be printed, about two years since, I reckon'd it little other than an expedient to disengage my self from any farther thoughts, and my friends from any expectation of it, which I could not well do, but by having a proof of the backwardness of persons to encourage, by subscription, a work
which

which would be so very expensive to the Undertakers ; but, the design being countenanced, beyond what I could have imagined, and numbers subscribed for, with more expedition than is usual, I was laid under an obligation immediately to prepare my Notes for the press, and set forward the work, which, through the divine goodness, has been thus far carried on ; and I cannot but take occasion to express my grateful acknowledgment of the respect that has been shewed me, by those who have encouraged this undertaking. If it may answer their expectation, and subserve their spiritual advantage, I shall count my labour well employ'd, and humbly offer the glory thereof, as a tribute due to God, whose interest is the only thing that demands all our time, strength, and utmost abilities. If I may but have a testimony from him that I have spoken nothing concerning him that is a dishonour to his name, unbecoming his perfections, or that has a tendency to lead his people out of the right way to the glorifying and enjoying of him, my end is fully answered. Whatever weakness I have discover'd arising from mine inequality, to the greatness of the subjects insisted on, I hope to obtain forgiveness thereof from God, whose cause I have endeavour'd to maintain ; and, to be excused by men, as I may truly say, I have not offer'd, either to him or them, what cost me nothing. I have, as far as I am able, adapted my method of reasoning to the capacities of those who are unacquainted with several abstruse and uncommon words and phrases, which have been often used by some who have treated on these subjects, which have a tendency rather to perplex, than improve the minds of men : Terms of art, as they are sometimes called, or hard words, used by *Metaphysicians* and *School-men*, have done little service to the cause of Christ.

If I have explain'd any doctrine, or given the sense of any scripture in a way somewhat different from what is commonly received, I have never done it out of the least affectation of singularity, nor taken pleasure in going out of the beaten path, having as great a regard to the footsteps of the flock, as is consistent with that liberty of thinking and reasoning, which we are allowed to use, who conclude, nothing to be an infallible rule of faith, but the inspired writings.

As to what I have advanced concerning the *eternal Generation of the Son*, and the *Procession of the Holy Ghost*, I have thought my self obliged to recede from some common modes of explication, which have been used, both by ancient and modern writers, in insisting on these mysterious doctrines, which, probably, will appear, if duly weighed, not to have done any great service to the cause which, with convincing evidence, they have maintained ; since it is obvious that this is the principal thing that has given occasion to some modern *Arians* to fill the margins of their books with quotations, taken out of the writings of others, whom they have either, without ground, pretended to have been on their side of the question, or charged with plucking down with one hand, what they have built up with the other.

Whether my method of explaining these doctrines be reckon'd just, or no, I cannot but persuade my self, that if what I have said, concerning

The P R E F A C E.

v

ing the subordination of these divine Persons, be consider'd in any other view, than as an explication of the sonship of Christ, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, it will not be reckon'd a deviating from the common faith of those who have defended the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity; and, if it be an error to maintain that these divine Persons, as well as the Father, are independent, as to their personality, as well as their essence, or to assert that the manner of their having the divine essence, as some express it, is independent, as well as the essence it self, then what I have deliver'd, on that subject, is to no purpose, which, when I am convinced of, I shall readily acknowledge my mistake, and count it an happiness to be undeceived.

As to what respects the *Decrees* of God, and more particularly those that relate to angels and men, and his *Providence*, as conversant about *sinful Actions*, and the *Origin of moral Evil*, I have endeavour'd to account for them in such a way, as, I trust, does not, in the least, infer God to be the author of sin; nor have I, in any instance, represented God as punishing sin, or determining to do it, out of his mere sovereignty, as though he designed to render his creatures miserable, without considering them as contracting guilt, and thereby procuring this to themselves. And, when I have been led to insist on the freeness of divine grace, and the *Covenant of Grace*, as made with Christ, and, in him, with the elect, and maintained the absoluteness and independency hereof on the will of man to render it effectual to salvation, I have, notwithstanding, said as much as is necessary concerning the conditionality of our claim to the blessings thereof, and the inseparable connection that there is between practical religion and salvation, which fences against the charge that is often brought against this doctrine, as though it led to licentiousness. This I could not omit to mention, that the Reader might not entertain groundless prejudices against some of the doctrines insisted on, before he duly weighs the method in which they are handled, or considers whether my defence of them against the popular objections, of that or any other kind, be just or no. Some, it may be, will see reason to conclude that it is; and others, who think that there are many unsurmountable difficulties on our side of the question, may be convinced, that there are difficulties of another nature, as great, if not greater, attending the opposite scheme, which they themselves maintain. But this I rather chuse to submit to the impartial judgment of those who are not disposed to condemn a doctrine, without desiring to know what may be said in defence thereof.

As to what concerns the work in general, it may be observed, that when I have occasion to illustrate an argument, by making use of any criticism that may be of advantage to it, or to give the sense of ancient writers, either for or against what I have laid down, I have inserted it in the *Margin*, that it might not appear to be a digression, or break the thread of the discourse.

I have also inserted most of the scriptures refer'd to in the *Margin*, which may be distinguished by their respective letters of direction, by which means the words thereof, that are brought to prove or illustrate any particular head of doctrine, are connected with it in one

continued sentence, and several repetitions of the same words thereby avoided.

The Title of every Page includes the Contents thereof, as far as it was possible to comprise them in one line ; and there is a *Table* added at the close of this Volume that comprises the contents thereof, in a method preferable to an alphabetical *Index*, it being laid down in such a form, as that the Reader may easily see the *Heads* of argument, under every *Question*, in their proper method and connection.

And, next to this, there is an *Index of Scriptures*, in which only those are inserted that are either more largely or concisely explain'd. This, together with the *Table*, was drawn up by a kind Brother, which I thankfully acknowledge, as having afforded me more leisure to attend to the work it self.

I have nothing farther to trouble the Reader with in this Preface ; but would only request of him, that, what thoughts soever he may entertain concerning the way in which I have endeavoured to state and defend some great and important truths, he would search the scriptures, and explain them agreeably to the divine perfections, and not think the worse of the gospel, which stands upon a firmer *Basis*, than the weak efforts of fallible men, who use their best endeavours to defend it. If we had not a surer rule of faith, than the methods of human reasoning, religion would be a matter of great uncertainty, and we should be in danger of being *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*. But our best security against this, will be our having hearts *established with Grace*, and rightly disposed to make a practical improvement of what we learn ; and, if we are enabled to follow on to know the Lord with minds free from prejudice, and if under a due sense of our own weakness, we humbly present our supplications to him, who is able to make us wise to salvation, we may then hope to attain to that knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, which shall be attended with peace and comfort here, and crowned with blessedness and glory hereafter.

May the great God, in whose hand is the life and usefulness of all men, succeed, with his blessing, what is humbly offer'd to his service, so far as it is adapted thereunto, and approved of by him, that hereby it may be conducive to the spiritual advantage of professing families, and the rising generation.





A
L I S T
O F T H E
N A M E S
Of those who have SUBSCRIBED to this
W O R K.

A



William Ashhurst, Esq; 7 Books
The Reverend Mr. William Arnold
The Reverend Mr. James Allen of Rochester
The Reverend Mr. Edmund Almond
The Reverend Mr. James Atkinson of Horsley
The Reverend Mr. John Atkinson of Stainton
Mr. Stephen Abbot
Mr. William Adams
Mr. Akers
Mr. Joseph Aldersey
Mr. Samuel Allen of Bristol
Mr. Jeremiah Armiger
Mr. Jeremiah Atkinson
Mr. Daniel Avery
Mr. John Ault
Mr. Charles Austin

B

THE Honourable Mrs. Birch of Kensington
Mrs. Elizabeth Brooks, of Hackney, 4 Books
Thomas Brumfall, of Blenheim, Esq;

Captain Othniel Barker
The Reverend Mr. William Barley of Bristol
The Reverend Mr. John Bedome of ditto
The Reverend Mr. James Belsham
The Reverend Mr. Robert Bragge
The Reverend Mr. John Buckley of Clare
The Reverend Mr. Thomas Bures
The Reverend Mr. John Button of Rye
Mr. Caleb Baker
Mr. Joshua Baker
Mrs. Mary Baker
Mr. Joseph Baller
Mr. Edward Barnard
Mr. Joseph Barnardiston, Stationer
Mr. William Barnet
Mr. Joseph Beete
Mr. Samuel Belsham of Hitchin
Mrs. Anna Benne
Mr. Andrew Bennet
Mr. Andrew Bennet of Cashburton
Mr. William Bentley
Mr. William Berrisfield
Mr. John Berrow of Bristol
Mr. Robert Berry of Hitchin
Mr. John Blackwell
Mr. Edward Blifs
Mr. William Blifs
Mr. Samuel Blythe
Mr. Thomas Boddington

Mr.

The NAMES of the SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. Cornelius Bogard of Colchester
 Mr. Daniel Booth
 Mr. Benjamin Bond
 Mr. Samuel Bond, 3 Books
 Mr. Charles Bowler
 Mr. Nicholas Brackstone of Whitchurch
 Mrs. Margaret Brain of Bristol
 Mr. Edward Brent
 Mr. John Brett of Kingswood
 Mr. Philip Brewer of Rendham, 7 Books
 Mr. Daniel Bright of Bristol
 Mr. William Bright
 Mrs. Jane Brooks
 Mr. Richard Brooks
 Mr. John Brown
 Mr. Joseph Browne of Bristol
 Mr. Robert Browne of ditto
 Mr. John Bull
 Mr. John Bull of Bristol
 Mr. John Bumpsted
 Mr. John Bunny of Andover
 Mr. Burrel, 7 Books
 Mr. Butcher
 Mr. Charles Buxton

C

William Cheesbrough, Gent.
 Madam Cope of Bristol
 Mrs. Elizabeth Cook of Stoke-Newington
 The Reverend Mr. Joseph Cappe
 The Reverend Mr. John Clifford, of Gosport,
 2 Books
 The Reverend Mr. John Collins of Colchester
 The Reverend Rowland Cotton, A. M. & M. D.
 2 Books
 Mr. John Canfton
 Mr. Charles Carlton
 Mr. Alexander Carter, of Ringwood, 3 Books
 Mr. John Channing
 Mr. Richard Chignall of Colchester
 Mr. Henry Chorley
 Mr. Robert Churchman of Saffron-Walden
 Mr. Daniel Clark
 Mr. Joseph Clark
 Mrs. Elizabeth Clark
 Mr. Thomas Clarke
 Mr. William Clark
 Mr. Robert Collins
 Mr. William Collins
 Mr. Richard Cooke
 Mr. John Cooke
 Mr. William Cook
 Mr. Richard Coop
 Mr. James Corderoy
 Mr. William Corderoy
 Mr. John Corrie, 2 Books
 Mr. Crabb of Blow Norton
 Mr. William Crank
 Mr. Humphrey Craner
 Mr. John Crisp
 Mr. John Crook
 Mr. John Crouch, 3 Books
 Mr. John Cumberland, of St. Edmond's-
 Bury
 Mr. Henry Cundell
 Mr. John Curlewes
 Mr. William Curlewes

D

THE Lady Margaret Dolins
 Daniel Disney, of Lincoln, Esq;
 The Reverend Mr. George Davy
 The Reverend Mr. Philip Dodridge of
 Northampton
 The Reverend Mr. Drewett of Bridport
 Mr. Abel Dagge of Bristol
 Mr. Thomas Dance
 Mr. Peter Davenport
 Mrs. Mary Davis
 Mr. Thomas Davis, 2 Books
 Mr. Benjamin Dean
 Mr. John Dear
 Mr. Joseph Densham
 Mr. William Doby
 Mr. John Dring
 Mr. James Dunbar
 Mr. Benjamin Dyer of Colchester
 Mrs. Hannah Dyer

E

THE Right Honourable James Erskine, of
 Grainge, one of the Senators of the Col-
 lege of Justice in Scotland
 Sir Richard Ellis, Bart.
 Sir Gilbert Elliot, of Stobbs, Bart.
 The Reverend Mr. Eedes of Saffron-Walden
 Mr. Arthur Eastman
 Mr. Nathaniel Edmonds
 Mr. Timothy Edwards
 Mr. Nathaniel Eeles, 7 Books
 Mrs. Sarah Ellis
 Mr. Samuel Ely of Bishop-Stortford
 Mr. Samuel Eyres of Bristol

F

THE Honourable Duncan Forbes, Esq; his
 Majesty's Advocate for Scotland
 Mr. Farr of Bristol, Gent.
 Thomas Fuller of Saffron-Walden, Gent.
 Madam Fry of Bristol
 The Reverend Mr. John Fletcher of Bradfield
 The Reverend Mr. Thomas Flower
 The Reverend Mr. Bernard Fosket of Bristol
 The Reverend Mr. William Fuller of Abingdon
 The Reverend Mr. Benjamin Fuller of Devizes
 Mr. Elias de Gruchy Fasset
 Mr. Thomas Fawcet
 Mr. Jonathan Fawconer
 Mr. Isaac Ferris
 Mr. Thomas Ferris
 Mr. Joseph Field of Tamsford
 Mr. Isaac Field
 Mr. Nathaniel Field
 Mr. Thomas Field, Sen.
 Mr. William Field
 Mr. James Figgins
 Mr. John Fisher
 Mr. Joseph Fisher
 Mr. Thomas Fitch
 Mr. Robert Flack
 Mr. John Flendal
 Mr. Richard Ford, Bookseller, 4 Books

Mr.

The NAMES of the SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. Jacob Fowler
Mr. Philip Fruchard
Mr. Benjamin Fuller of Milton
Mr. Benjamin Fuller of London, 5 Books
Mr. James Fuller
Mr. Joseph Fuller
Mrs. Mary Fuller
Mr. Matthew Fuller
Mr. Richard Fuller
Mr. Thomas Fuller
Mr. William Fuller

G

John Gotheridge of Preston, Hartfordshire, *Gent.*
John Green of Hatfield Broad-Oak, Essex, *Gent.*
John Griffis of Pont-Poole, Wales, *Gent.*
Samuel Gowland, *Gent.* 4 Books
The Reverend Mr. Jeremiah Gill of Sheffield
The Reverend Mr. Peter Goodwin
The Reverend Mr. John Grant of Scotland
The Reverend Mr. John Guyse
Mr. Ebenezer Gardner
Mr. John Gardner
Mr. George Gibson
Mr. Robert Gilbert
Mr. Richard Gines
Mr. James Gird
Mr. Thomas Glas
Mr. James Glascock
Mr. Andrew Godfrey
Mr. Richard Going, *Jun.* of Bristol
Mr. Richard Good
Mr. John Goss of Bramford
Mr. Thomas Grace, *Watchmaker*
Mr. Benjamin Green of Chelmsford
Mr. John Gregory, *Merchant*
Mr. Joseph Gregory of Bristol
Mr. John Grimstone of Colchester
Mr. Thomas Gurner

H

John Hanchet of Creshal-Grainge, *Esq;* 3 Books
Robert Houlton of Griddleton in Wilts, *Esq;*
Fowke Hussey, *Esq;*
Mrs. Helder of Little Offley in Hartfordshire
Captain Nicholas Humphrey
The Reverend Mr. Thomas Hall, 2 Books
The Reverend Mr. John Halford of Bishop-Stortford, 3 Books
The Reverend Mr. Thomas Harris of Saffron-Walden
The Reverend Mr. Samuel Hawtyn
The Reverend Mr. Samuel Hebden of Wrentham
The Reverend Mr. John How of Foulkstone
The Reverend Mr. John Hubbard
The Reverend Mr. Hulme of Basingstoke
The Reverend Mr. John Hurron, *Sen.* 7 Books
The Reverend Mr. John Hurron, *Jun.*
The Reverend Mr. Samuel Hurron
Mr. Stephen Halford
Mr. Joseph Hall
Mr. Hancock of Marlborough
Mr. William-Henry Hallum

Mr. John Hamman
Mr. Thomas Hancock, *Bookseller*, at Boston in New-England, 6 Books
Mr. John Hargrave, *Sen.*
Mr. Richard Hargrave
Mr. Solomon Harrison
Mr. John Hattersley
Mr. William Hatton
Mr. Joseph Haws of Bishop-Stortford
Mr. Benjamin Higgs
Mr. John Hill
Mrs. Hill
Mr. William Hills
Mr. William Hiller
Mr. James Hilton
Mr. John Hitchin
Mr. Roger Hodgkin of Dunmow
Mr. Richard Holden, 2 Books
Mr. Robert Hopkins of Whitchurch
Mr. Henry Horn
Mr. Richard Horton
Mr. William Houghton
Mr. William Houston
Mr. Benjamin Howard
Mr. Howard of St. Edmund's-Bury
Mr. Thomas Howlett of Chelmsford
Mr. James Howfen
Mr. Thomas Howson of Hackney
Mr. Joseph Huggins
Mr. John Hulme
Mr. Robert Hume
Mr. Charles Hunt

I

MR. Peter Johnson, *Alderman* of Colchester
Mr. Matthew Jackson
Mr. Thomas James
Mr. Thomas Jervaise
Mr. Thomas Jekill
Mr. Thomas Joel
Mr. William Johnson
Mr. Francis Jones
Mr. John Joules of Gosport
Mr. John Ironmonger

K

MR S. Kett of Clapham
The Reverend Mr. Kemp of Linton
The Reverend Mr. John Killinghall
Mr. Kemp of Chivington, Suffolk
Mr. John King, *Sen.*
Mr. Thomas King
Mr. Richard Kite of Bristol

L

William Limbrey, *Gent.*
Simon Lord, of Hatfield Broad-Oak, Essex, *Gent.*
The Reverend Mr. Henry Lindsay of Bothkennar in Scotland
Mr. Jeremiah Lagden
Mr. Daniel Lamport, *Merchant*

Mr.

The NAMES of the SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. Nicholas Langwith
 Mr. John Ledyard of Bristol
 Mr. James Leman
 Mr. Robert Lewin
 Mr. Thomas Liddel of Gosport
 Mr. Henry Limburner
 Mr. Henry Linaker
 Mr. Josiah Lincoln of Wrentham in Suffolk
 Mr. John Livermore of Braintree
 Mr. Benjamin Lorkin
 Mr. Joseph Lloyd
 Mr. Joseph Loyd of Beverley
 Mr. Bartholomew Lumfdale

M

THE Reverend Mr. Hugh Magee
 The Reverend Mr. John Mason
 The Reverend Mr. Henry Miles of Tooting
 The Reverend Mr. David Miller of Hammer-
 smith, 3 Books
 Mr. John Mackley
 Mr. James Mac-uen, Bookseller
 Mr. Thomas Malyn of Elmdon
 Mr. Thomas Malyn of Linton
 Mr. Samuel Manning
 Mr. Nathaniel Meakin
 Mr. Caleb Moor of Bristol
 Mr. Samuel Marner
 Mr. George Martin of Wivenhoe, Essex
 Mr. Charles Mason
 Mr. Joseph Matthews, 2 Books
 Mr. John Mayler of Bristol
 Mr. Benjamin Mee
 Mr. Richard Meighen
 Mr. Millikin, Apothecary
 Mr. Messinger, 7 Books
 Mr. Miles of Kensington
 Mr. Edward Miller
 Mr. Daniel Monk
 Mrs. Martha Moore
 Mr. Richard Moth, Druggist
 Mr. James Moulton

N

THE Reverend Mr. John Norman of Portf-
 mouth, 2 Books
 The Reverend Mr. William Notcutt of Ips-
 wich
 Mr. Thomas Newman
 Mr. Thomas Newcomb of Waddington in
 Lincolnshire
 Mr. Nathaniel Newton of Beckles in Suffolk,
 2 Books
 Mrs. Elizabeth Nicholson
 Mr. Thomas Nunn of Southwold, Suffolk

O

Thomas Owen, Esq; 2 Books
 The Reverend Mr. John Olive of Lewes
 in Sussex
 The Reverend Mr. Walter Overflow
 Mr. Charles Osborn, Brewer
 Mrs. Mary Oswald

P

Richard Parminster of Broadgate, Gent.
 The Rev. Mr. Francis Petchy of Wenden
 The Reverend Mr. Nathaniel Petto of Guild-
 ford in Surrey.
 The Reverend Mr. Joseph Pitts of Hitchin
 Mr. Rowland Page
 Mrs. Dorothy Pain
 Mr. John Palmer
 Mr. William Pampion, 2 Books
 Mr. Samuel Parker
 Mr. Patrick
 Mr. William Paulden
 Mr. Jonathan Peacock of Linton
 Mr. Joseph Pedder
 Mr. George Peep of Bristol
 Mr. George Penton
 Mr. John Perry of Hatfield Broad-Oak,
 Essex
 Mr. John Phillips
 Mr. Joseph Phillips of Bishop-Stortford
 Mrs. Mary Phillips
 Mr. Joseph Pitts of Exon
 Mr. John Pointer of Whitchurch
 Mr. Poole of Bristol
 Mr. William Pounsford of Drewstenton
 Mr. John Prentice
 Mr. Ingles Prescott
 Mr. Andrew Prime of the Bank
 Mr. Benjamin Primrose of Beccles
 Mr. Henry Procter

Q

THE Reverend Mr. Samuel Quincy

R

James Raymond of Saffron-Walden, Gent.
 Captain Richards
 The Reverend Mr. Richard Rawlin
 The Reverend Mr. Joshua Reed
 The Reverend Lacklan Ross, M. A. of Rook-
 wood-Hall, Essex
 The Reverend Mr. Griffith Rudd of Southill
 The Reverend Mr. Sayer Rudd
 The Reverend Mr. Patrick Ruffel
 The Reverend Mr. Henry Rutter
 Mr. Ralutt of Gosport
 Mr. John Rankin
 Mr. Thomas Rankin
 Mr. William Rankin of Saffron-Walden
 Mr. William Rawlins, 2 Books
 Mr. George Read
 Mrs. Hannah Redgrave of Woodbridge
 Mr. Terry Reynolds
 Mr. John Rice of Exon
 Mr. Joseph Richards
 Mr. George Ridgway
 Mr. George Ring
 Mr. Gearing Roberts
 Mr. John Roberts
 Mr. Richard Roberts
 Mr. James Robjert of Colchester
 Mr. Joseph Robins of Gosport
 Mr. Robinson of St. Edmund's-Bury

Mr.

The NAMES of the SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. William Robinson of Mile-End
 Mr. William Robinson, *Jun.*
 Mrs. Elizabeth Roe
 Mr. Robert Rogers
 Mr. Henry Romsey of Bristol
 Mr. Joseph Rook
 Mr. Noah Room of Aton
 Mr. John Rous of Bishop-Stortford, 6 Books
 Mr. Simon Rous
 Mr. Lewis Rowland of Bristol
 Mr. Jonathan Rowlet
 Mr. Thomas Ruffe
 Mr. George Rutt

S

THE Right Honourable James Earl of Strathmore
 Samuel Sewall of Boston, New-England, Esq;
 6 Books
 Richard Sheppard of Preston, Esq;
 Thomas South of North-Cove in Suffolk, *Gent.*
 Captain William Sault of Lewis in Suffex
 Captain John Scott
 The Reverend Mr. Samuel Sanderfon
 The Reverend Mr. Thomas Savil
 The Reverend Mr. Thomas Scott, of Norwich,
 7 Books
 The Reverend Mr. John Sewell
 The Reverend Mr. John Sladen
 The Reverend Mr. Benjamin Stoneman of Otter
 St. Mary, Devon
 Mr. James Sage of Bristol
 Mr. John Sage of ditto
 Mr. Saunders of Cambridge
 Mr. Thomas Scaddon
 Mr. John Scott
 Mr. Christopher Scrape, 21 Books
 Mr. Richard Sell
 Mr. George Shanks
 Mr. Edmund Sharp
 Mr. Richard Sharp
 Mr. Thomas Sharp of Rumsey
 Mr. Stephen Simpson of Colchester
 Mr. Thomas Slade
 Mr. Joseph Smith, Stationer
 Mr. Robert Smith
 Mr. Samuel Smith
 Mr. William Smith, 2 Books
 Mr. William Souley
 Mr. William Spiltimber
 Mr. William Staples, *Jun.*
 Mr. Henry Stanton
 Mr. Richard Stokes of High Easton, Essex
 Mr. Edward Stone
 Mrs. Mary Stone
 Mr. Thomas Stone
 Mr. John Stonard, 2 Books
 Mr. Jonathan Stonard
 Mr. Thomas Styles

T

Joseph Tucker of Rye, *Gent.*
 Madam Thomas of Bristol
 The Reverend Mr. Abraham Taylor, 3 Books
 The Reverend Mr. Thomas Tingey

The Reverend Mr. Robert Trail of Panbride,
 Scotland
 The Reverend Mr. William Trail of Benholm,
 Scotland
 Mr. Jonathan Tabor of Colchester
 Mr. Joseph Taylor
 Mr. George Temple of St. Edmund's-Bury
 Mr. George Thawyer
 Mr. Thomas Theed
 Mr. Michael Threlcald
 Mr. Jonas Thorowgood, 7 Books
 Mr. William Tichborne
 Mr. Samuel Tipton of Bristol
 Mr. Benjamin Toft
 Mr. John Trail of Edinburgh, 2 Books
 Mr. Trahan of Gosport
 Mr. Robert Trifram of Barnstable
 Mr. Benjamin Turner
 Mr. William Turner

U

MR. John Undershell, *Jun.*
 Mr. Thomas Unwin
 Mr. John Vowell, Stationer
 Mr. James Vowles of Bristol
 Mr. Edward Utting of Beccles in Suffolk

W

THE Reverend Mr. Edward Wallin,
 2 Books
 The Reverend Mr. Henry Ward of Woodbridge,
 7 Books
 The Reverend Mr. Thomas Wickes of Wats-
 field, 10 Books
 The Reverend Mr. Williamson of East Bergholt
 The Reverend Mr. Simon Weaver
 The Reverend Mr. George Wigget of South-
 wold
 The Reverend Mr. Daniel Wilcox
 The Reverend Mr. Samuel Wilton
 The Reverend William Wisheart, D. D.
 The Reverend Mr. James Wood
 The Reverend Samuel Wood of Lavenham
 The Reverend Mr. Nathaniel Wyles of Terling
 in Essex
 Mr. John Waite
 Mr. Thomas Wake of Southwold
 Mr. Joseph Walker
 Mr. William Wallman
 Mrs. Anne Ward
 Mrs. Elizabeth Warner
 Mrs. Warner
 Mr. Robert Warner
 Mr. Warren, 3 Books
 Mr. Christopher Warren
 Mr. Francis Warren
 Mrs. Elizabeth Waterman of Bristol
 Mr. Jasper Waters, *Sen.*
 Mr. Jasper Waters, *Jun.*
 Mr. Robert Watts
 Mr. Joseph Watson
 Mr. Thomas Watson, 3 Books
 Mr. James Wealthdeale
 Mr. Matthew Wealy of Ipswich
 Mr. Benjamin Webb

Mr.

The NAMES of the SUBSCRIBERS.

Mr. Charles Wells
 Mr. John Wells
 Mr. Welsh, *Apothecary*
 Mrs. Whitaker of Kingston
 Mr. John Whitghman of Exon
 Mr. John Whittingham
 Mr. William Whitmore
 Mr. Robert Whitworth, *Bookseller*, Manchester
 Mr. Francis Wicks of Cambridge
 Mr. John Wildman, *Attorney*
 Mr. John Wilkinfon
 Mr. John Wilkinfon of Ipswich, 2 Books
 Mr. Barnabas Wilcox, 2 Books
 Mr. Daniel Willmot
 Mr. Thomas Willmot
 Mr. Elias Wilfon

Mrs. Elizabeth Wilfon
 Mr. John Wilfon
 Mr. Samuel Wilfon
 Mr. Joseph Wife
 Mr. James Wooley
 Mr. John Worger
 Mr. John Wood of Manchester

Y

M R. Yates, *Tobacconist*
 Mr. George Yearnold of Bromsgrove,
 Worcesterfhire
 Mr. James Young, *Merchant*
 Mr. John Young

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES sent in after the former Sheet was printed.

The Reverend Mr. John Bruce of Airth, in Scotland Mr. Thomas Davidson, *Merchant*, in Edinburgh

The Author has observed these *Errata*, and probably over-look'd others; which, if they occur, will be printed in the SECOND VOLUME.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 130. Line 5. for on, read an. P. 188. l. 8. for warwant, read warrant. P. 269. l. 29. for was, read wab.
 P. 367. l. 8. read Ifai. xlii. 1, 6. P. 416. l. 33. dele 1. P. 479. l. 11. dele that.

7 DE 61



THE



THE
DOCTRINES
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
EXPLAINED and DEFENDED.
BEING THE
Substance of several LECTURES
ON
The Assembly's Larger Catechism.

The INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE we enter on our present undertaking, we shall premise a few things leading to the subject matter thereof; and that we may begin with what is most obvious, let it be consider'd,

I. That it is a duty incumbent on all who profess the Christian name, to be well acquainted with those great doctrines on which our faith, hope and worship are founded; for, without the knowledge hereof, we must necessarily be at a loss as to the way of salvation, which none has a right to prescribe but he who is the author thereof.

II. This knowledge of divine truth must be derived from the holy scriptures, which are the only fountain of spiritual wisdom, whereby we are instructed in those things that could have been known no other way but by divine revelation.

III. It will be of singular use for us not only to know the doctrines that are contained in scripture; but to observe their connection and dependence on one another, and to digest them into such a method, that subsequent truths may give light to them that went before; or to lay them down in such a way, that the whole scheme of religion may be comprised

B

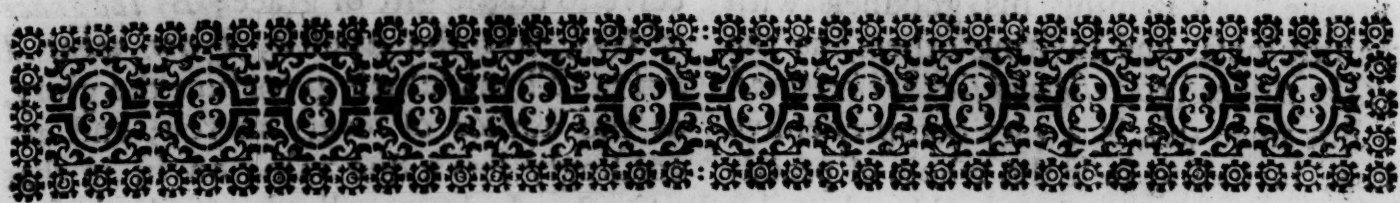
prised in a narrow compass, and, as it were, beheld with one view, which will be a very great help to memory: and this is what we call a system of divine truths, or a methodical collection of the chief articles of our religion, adapted to the capacity of those who need to be taught the first principles of the *Oracles of God*; and if they are designed to give the world a *specimen* of that *form of sound words*, which the church thinks it self obliged to *hold fast*, and stedfastly to adhere to, then we call it a Confession of faith, or, if digested into questions and answers, we call it a Catechism. And though systems of divinity, Confessions of faith and Catechisms, are treated with contempt, instead of better arguments, by many who are no friends to the doctrines contained therein, and who appear to be partial in their resentment, in as much as they do not dislike those compositions which are agreeable to their own sentiments, by whatever name they are called; yet we are bound to conclude that the labour of those who have been happy in the sense they have given of scripture, and the method in which they have explained the doctrines thereof, in what form soever it has been, is a great blessing to us; though we are far from concluding that it is of equal authority with scripture, or that every word contained therein is infallible; nor do we regard it any further than as it is agreeable to, or sufficiently proved from scripture.

IV. Confessions of faith and Catechisms are not to be reckoned a novel invention, or not consonant to the scripture rule, since they are nothing else but a peculiar way of preaching or instructing us in divine truths. Therefore, since scripture lays down no certain invariable rule concerning this matter, the same command that warrants preaching the word in any method, includes the explaining of it, as occasion serves, in a catechistical one.

V. As there are many excellent bodies of divinity printed in our own and foreign languages, and collections of sermons on the principal heads thereof; so there are various catechisms, or methodical summaries of divine truths, which, when consonant to scripture, are of great advantage to all Christians, whether elder or younger.

VI. The Catechisms composed by the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, are esteemed as not inferior to any that are extant, either in our own or foreign languages, the doctrines therein contained being of the highest importance, and consonant to scripture; and the method in which they are laid down is so agreeable, that it may serve as a directory for the ranging our *Ideas* of the common heads of divinity in such an order, that what occurs under each of them may be reduced to its proper place. It is the *larger* of them that we have attempted to explain and regulate our method by; because it contains several heads of divinity, not touched on in the *shorter*. And if, in any particular instance, we are obliged to recede from the common mode of speaking (though it is to be hoped not from the common faith, once delivered to the saints) we submit our reasoning to the judgment of those who are disposed to pardon less mistakes, and improve what comes with sufficient evidence to the best purposes.

The work, indeed, is large, but the vast variety of subjects will render it more tolerable; the form in which it appears is somewhat differing from that in which it was first delivered, in a publick audience, though that may probably be no disadvantage to it, especially since it is rather designed to be read in families than committed to memory, and repeated by different persons, as it has been. The plainness of the style may contribute to its usefulness; and its being less embarrassed with scholastick terms than some controversial writings are, may render it more intelligible to private Christians, whose instruction and advantage is designed thereby. It would be too great a vanity to expect that it should pass through the world without that censure which is common to all attempts of the like nature, since mens sentiments in divinity differ as much as their faces; and some are not disposed to weigh those arguments that are brought to support any scheme of doctrine, which differs from what they have before received. However, the work comes forth with this advantage, that it has already conflicted with some of the difficulties it is like to meet with, as well as been favoured with some success, and therefore the event hereof is left in his hand whose cause and truth is endeavoured to be maintained.



Of MAN'S Chief END.

QUEST. I. *What is the chief and highest end of man?*

ANSW. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever.

1. **I**T is supposed, in this answer, that every intelligent creature, acting as such, designs some end, which excites endeavours to attain it.

2. The ends for which we act, if warrantable, may be considered as to their degree of excellency, and, in proportion to it, are to be pursued by proper means conducing thereto.

3. There is one that may be termed the chief and highest end, as having an excellency and tendency to make us blessed above all others: this consists, as it is observed in this answer, in the glorifying and eternal enjoyment of God, the fountain of blessedness.

If it be enquired with what propriety these may both be called chief and highest, the answer is obvious and easy, *viz.* That the former is absolutely so, beyond which nothing more excellent or desirable can be conceived; the latter is the highest or best in its kind, which, notwithstanding, is referred, as a means leading to the other; and both these ends, which, with this distinction, we call chief and highest, are to be particularly considered by us, together with the connection that there is between them. And,

I. We are to consider what it is to glorify God. In order to our understanding of this, let it be premised,

1. That there is a great difference between God's glorifying himself and our glorifying him; he glorifies himself when

he demonstrates or shews forth his glory; we glorify him by ascribing to him the glory that is his due: even as the Sun discovers its brightness by its rays, and the eye beholds it. God glorifies himself, by furnishing us with matter for praise; we glorify him when we offer praise, or give unto him the glory due to his Name.

2. Creatures are said to glorify God various ways; some things do it only objectively, as by them, angels and men are led to glorify him; Thus ^a *the heavens declare his glory*. The same might be said of all other inanimate creatures which glorify God, by answering the end of their creation, though they know it not: but intelligent creatures, and particularly men, are said to glorify God actively; and this they do by admiring and adoring his divine perfections: these, as incomprehensible, are the object of admiration; and accordingly the Apostle admires the divine wisdom^b; *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* and as they are divine, so they are the object of adoration: God is to be admired in all the displays of his relative or manifestative glory; and *his work, which men behold*, is to be magnified^c: But he is to be adored more especially for his essential perfections.

We are to glorify God, by recommending, proclaiming, and setting forth his excellency to others. What we have the highest value for, we desire that others may have the same regard to it with our selves: thus it is observed by the Evangelist, that when the Disciples received their first conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, they imparted this to others; as *Andrew to Peter*, and *Philip to Nathanael*^d; so the woman of Samaria being convinced hereof, endeavoured to persuade all her neighbours to believe in him, as she did^e: Thus we glorify God

^a Psal. xix. 1.

^b Rom. xi. 33.

^c Job xxxvi. 24.

^d John i. 41, 45.

^e John iv. 28, 29.

by making mention of his name with reverence, proclaiming his goodness with thankfulness, and inviting others, as the *Psalmist* does^f, to *taste and see that he is good*.

But since this is a very comprehensive duty, including in it the whole of practical religion, it may be considered under the following particulars.

1. We glorify God by confessing and taking shame to our selves for all the sins we have committed, which is interpretatively to acknowledge the holiness of his nature, and of his law, which the Apostle asserts to be *holy, just and good*^g. This *Joshua* advises *Achan* to do; *to give glory to God, by making confession to him*^h. And thus the *penitent thief*, who was crucified with our Saviour, glorified God, by confessing that he received the *due reward of his deeds*ⁱ. So did the *Levites*, in their prayer recorded by *Nehemiah*, when they said to God, *Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly*^k.

2. By loving and delighting in him above all things, which is to act as those who own the transcendent amiableness of his perfection, as the object of their highest esteem. Thus the *Psalmist* says^l, *Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none, or nothing, upon earth, that I desire besides thee*.

3. By believing and trusting in him, committing all our concerns, both in life and death, for time and eternity, into his hands: thus *Abraham*^m is said *to be strong in faith, giving glory to God*. And the Apostle *Paul*ⁿ, to have *committed his all to him*.

4. By a fervent zeal for his honour; and that either for the honour of his truth and Gospel, when denied, disbelieved or perverted; or for the honour of his holiness, or any of his other perfections, when they are reflected on, or reproached, either by the tongues or actions of those who set themselves against him.

5. By improving our talents, and bringing forth fruit in proportion to the means we enjoy; *herein*, says our Saviour, *is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*^o.

6. By walking humbly, thankfully and cheerfully before God. Humility acknowledges that infinite distance which is between him and us; retains a due sense of our own unworthiness of all we have or

hope for; and owns every thing we receive to be the gift of grace; *By the grace of God*, says the Apostle, *I am what I am*^p. Thankfulness gives him the glory, as the author of every mercy; and accordingly sets a due value on it, in that respect. And to walk cheerfully before him, is to recommend his service as most agreeable, whereby we discover that we do not repent that we were engaged therein; which is what the *Psalmist* intends, when he says^q, *Serve the Lord with gladness*.

7. By heavenly-mindedness; when we desire to be with him to behold his glory. To which we must add, that all this is to be done in the name of Christ, our great Mediator, and by strength derived from him.

8. As we are to glorify God, by yielding obedience to his commanding will, as in the afore said instances, so we are to do it by an entire submission to his disposing will; particularly, when under afflictive dispensations of providence, we must own his sovereignty and right to *do what he will with us, as his own*^r; and that these afflictions are infinitely *less than our iniquities deserve*^s. And we must adore his wisdom and goodness in trying our graces hereby, and dealing with us in such a way as is *needful*, and that only *for a season*^t. And we are to own his goodness in suiting our strength to our burdens, and over-ruling all this for our spiritual advantage. It also consists in an easy, patient and contented frame of spirit, without the least murmuring or repining thought; concluding, that whatever he does is *well done*^u. And, which is something more, in rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer the loss of all things, yea, even of life it self, if called to it, for his sake; of which we have various instances in scripture^x.

Moreover, we ought to glorify God in all the natural, civil and religious actions of life, which are to be consecrated or devoted to him. We enjoy the blessings of life to no purpose if we do not live to the Lord, and thankfully acknowledge that we receive them all from his hand; and whatever the calling be, wherewith we are called, we must therein abide with him, and see that we have his warrant to engage in it, and expect success from his blessing attending

^f Psal. xxxiv. 8.

^g Rom. vii. 12.

^h Josh. vii. 19.

ⁱ Luke xxiii. 40, 41.

^k Neh. ix. 33.

^l Psal. lxxiii. 25.

^m Rom. iv. 20.

ⁿ 2 Tim. i. 12.

^o John xv. 8.

^p 1 Cor. xv. 10.

^q Psal.

c. 2.

^r Matth. xx. 15.

^s Ezra ix. 13.

^t 1 Pet. i. 6.

^u Psal. cxix. 65.

^x Acts v. 41. Heb.

x. 34. Acts xx. 24.

The chief End of MAN is to glorify GOD.

5

it, or else it will be to no purpose. Thus says *Moses*, *It is the Lord thy God that giveth thee power to get wealth*^v. And, in all our dealings with men, we are to consider our selves as under the inspection of the all-seeing eye of God, to whom we are accountable for all we do, and should be induced hereby, to exercise our selves always to keep consciences void of offence towards God and man.

As for religious duties, wherein we have more immediately to do with God, we are to glorify him, by taking up a profession of religion in general, as being influenced by his authority, encouraged by his promised assistance, and approving our selves to him, as the searcher of hearts: and we must take heed that we do not rest in an outward form or shew of godliness, without the power thereof; or in having a name to live without a principle of spiritual life, by which we may be enabled to put forth living and spiritual actions agreeable thereunto: and all these religious duties must be performed by faith, whereby we depend on Christ, our great Mediator, both for assistance and acceptance, by which means we glorify him, as the fountain of all grace, in whom alone both our persons and services are accepted in the sight of God, and redound to his glory. And this is to be done at all times; so that when our thoughts are not directly conversant about any of the divine perfections, as it often happens, when we are engaged in some of the more minute, or indifferent actions of life; yet we are to glorify him habitually, as having our hearts right with him; so that whatever we do may refer ultimately to his glory. As every step the traveller takes is towards his journey's end, though it may not be every moment in his thoughts; so the less important actions of life should be subservient to those that are of greater consequence, in which the honour of God and religion is more immediately concerned, in which sense we may be said to glorify him therein.

Thus having considered, that it is our indispensable duty to make the glory of God our highest end in all our actions, we might farther add, as a motive to enforce it, that God is the first cause of all things, and his own glory was the end he designed in all his works, whether

of creation or providence: and it is certain, that this is the most excellent end we can propose to our selves; therefore the most valuable actions of life ought to be referred to it; and our hearts most set upon it; otherwise we act below the dignity of our nature; and, while other creatures, designed only to glorify him objectively, answer the end for which they were made, we, by denying him that tribute of praise which is due from us, abuse our superior faculties, and live in vain.

II: The next thing to be considered is what it is to enjoy God.

I. This supposes a propriety in, or claim to him, as our God; we cannot be said to enjoy that which we have no right or claim to, as one man cannot be said to enjoy an estate which belongs to another; so God must be our God in covenant, or we cannot enjoy him; and that he is so, with respect to all that fear him, is evident, inasmuch as he gives them leave to say^z, *This God is our God*; and^a, *God, even our own God, shall bless us*.

2. To enjoy God, is to have a special gracious communion with him, to converse or walk with him, and to delight in him, as when we can say^b, *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. This enjoyment of God, or communion with him, is,

(1.) That which we are blessed with in this world, which is but imperfect, as we know and love him but in part, and our communion with him is often interrupted and weakened, through the prevalency of indwelling sin: and that joy and delight which arises from thence is often clouded and sullied; and, at best, we enjoy him here but in a mediate way, in and under his ordinances, as agreeable to this present state.

(2.) Believers shall enjoy him perfectly and immediately in heaven, without intermission or abatement, and that for ever; this is called, *Seeing him as he is*^c; and being *with him where he is, to behold his glory*^d. And in order hereto, their souls shall be made capable or receptive hereof, by the removal not only of all sinful but natural imperfections, and shall be more enlarged, as well as have brighter discoveries of the divine glory: and this shall be attended with a perfect freedom from all the consequences of sin; such as

^v Deut. viii. 18.
xvii. 24.

^a Psal. xlviii. 14.

^z Psal. lxvii. 6.

^b 1 John i. 3.

^c 1 John iii. 2.

^d John

sorrow, divine desertion, and the many evils that attend us in this present life, as well as from all temptations to it. So that their happiness shall be confirmed and secured to them, and that with this advantage, that it shall be impossible for them to be dispossessed of it; this is certainly the most desirable end, next to the glory of God, that can be intended or pursued by us.

III. This leads us to consider the connection that there is between our glorifying God and enjoyment of him. God has joined these two together, so that one shall not be attained without the other. It is the highest presumption to expect to be made happy with him for ever, without living to his glory here. For in as much as heaven is a state of perfect blessedness, they, who shall hereafter be possessed of it, must be trained up, or made meet for it, which is the grand design of all the means of grace. How preposterous would it be to suppose, that they, who have no regard to the honour of God here, shall be crowned with glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, in his presence hereafter! Therefore a life of holiness is absolutely necessary to the heavenly blessedness; and since these two are so connected together, they who experience the one, shall not fail of the other; for this is secured to them by the faithfulness of God, who has promised to give *grace and glory*. Therefore *he who begins a good work in them, will perform it*; and give them *the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls*.

From the connection that there is between our glorifying and enjoying God, we may infer,

1. That it is a very preposterous thing for any one to assign this as a mark of grace, that persons must be content to perish eternally, that God may be glorified. 'Tis true, it is alledged in favour of this supposition, that *Moses*, and the *Apostle Paul*, seem to give countenance to it; one by saying^a, *If thou wilt forgive their sin; and, if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written*; the other^b, *I could wish that my self were accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsmen, according to the flesh*.

But to this it may be answered, that *Moses*, in desiring to be blotted out of the book which God had written, must

not be supposed to be willing to perish eternally for *Israel's* sake; but he is content to be blotted out of the book of the living, or to have his name no more remembered on earth, seems to decline the honour which God had offered him, when he said^c, *Let me alone, that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation*; he desires not the advancement of his own family, if *Israel* must cease to be a people, to whom God had promised to be a God.

As for the *Apostle Paul's* wish, it is either, as some suppose, a rash and inconsiderate flight of zeal for God, and so not warrantable, though in some respects proceeding from a good principle; or rather, as I humbly conceive the meaning is, he could wish himself accursed from Christ, so far as is consistent with his love; or he is content to be under the external marks of God's displeasure; or deprived of the comfortable sensation of his love, or many of those fruits and effects thereof, which the believer enjoys in this life; for I cannot, in the least, think he desires to be deprived of a real interest in it, or to be eternally separated from Christ on any condition whatsoever.

2. Since the eternal enjoyment of God is one great end which we ought to have in view, it is no sign of a mercenary spirit to have an eye to the heavenly glory, to quicken us to duty; seeing this is promised by God to those who are faithful, thus^d; *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory*. The like promises we have in many other scriptures, which are designed to excite our desire and hope of this blessedness; therefore the exercise of these graces, from such motives, is far from being unlawful: yea, it is commended in the saints, who are said^e, to *desire a better country; that is, an heavenly*. And *Moses* is commended for having the *Recompense of reward* in view, when he preferred the^f *Reproach of Christ* before the *Treasures of Egypt*.

Nevertheless, when this respect to future blessedness is warrantable, it must be considered as an expedient for our glorifying God, while we behold his glory; and when we consider it as a reward, we must not look upon it as what is merited by our service, or con-

^a Psal. lxxxiv. 11.
10.

^b Psal. lxxiii. 24.

^c Phil. ii. 6.

^d Heb. xi. 16.

^e 1 Pet. i. 9.

^f Ver. 26.

^g Exod. xxxii. 32.

^h Rom. ix. 3.

ⁱ Exod. xxxii.

ferred in a way of debt, but as a reward of grace, given freely to us; though founded on the merits of Christ.

QUEST. II. *How doth it appear that there is a God?*

ANSW. The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare that there is a God; but his word and spirit only, do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.

BEFORE we enter on the proof of this important doctrine, let it be premised, that we ought to be able to prove, by arguments, or give a reason of our belief that there is a God.

1. Because it is the foundation of all natural and revealed religion; and therefore it must not be received merely by tradition, as though there were no other reason why we believe it, but because others do so, or because we have been instructed herein from our childhood; for that is unbecoming the dignity and importance of the subject, and would be an instance of great stupidity, especially seeing we have so full and demonstrative an evidence thereof, taken from the whole frame of nature; in which there is nothing but what affords an argument, to confirm our belief that there is a God.

2. There is a great deal of atheism in our hearts, by reason whereof we are prone sometimes to call in question the being, perfections, and providence of God. To which we may also add, that the Devil frequently injects atheistical thoughts into our minds, which is a great affliction to us, and renders it necessary that we should use all possible means for our establishment in this great truth.

3. The abounding of atheism in the world, and the boldness of many in arguing against this truth, renders it necessary that we should be able to defend it, that we may stop the mouths of blasphemers, and so plead the cause of God, and assert his being and perfections against those that deny them; as °, *The fool, who saith in his heart there is no God.*

4. This will greatly tend to establish our faith in those comfortable truths that

arise from our interest in him, and give us a more solid foundation for our hope, as excited by his promises, which receive all their force and virtue from those perfections which are implied in the *Idea* of a God.

5. This will make us set a due value on his works, by which we are led to conclude his eternal power and Godhead, and so to admire him in them^p, *Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.*

We shall now consider those arguments mentioned in this answer, by which the being of a God may be evinced; as,

I. From the light of nature in man, by which we understand that reason which he is endowed with; whereby he is distinguished from, and rendered superior to, all other creatures in this lower world, whereby he is able to observe the connection of things, and their dependence on one another, and infer those consequences which may be deduced from thence. These reasoning powers, indeed, are very much sullied, depraved and weakened, by our apostacy from God, but not wholly obliterated; so that there are some remains thereof, which are common to all nations, whereby, without the help of special revelation, it may be known that there is a God.

But this either respects the principle of reasoning, which we were born with, upon the account whereof infants are called intelligent creatures; or the exercise thereof in a discursive way, in the adult, who only are capable to discern this truth, which they do more or less, in proportion to their natural capacity, as they make advances in the knowledge of other things. Now for the proof of the being of a God from the light of nature, let the following propositions be considered in their respective order.

1. There hath been, for many ages past, a succession of creatures in the world.

2. These creatures could not make themselves, for that which is nothing cannot act; if it makes it self, it acts before it exists; it acts as a creator before it exists as a creature; and it must be, in the same respect, both a cause and an effect, or it must be, and not be, at the same time, than which nothing can be more absurd; therefore creatures were made by another, upon which account we call them creatures.

° Psal. xiv. 1.

^p Job xxxvi. 24.

3. These creatures could not make one another; for to create something out of nothing, or out of matter altogether unfit to be made what is produced out of it, is to act above the natural powers of the creature, and contrary to the fixed laws of nature; and therefore is too great a work for a creature, who can do nothing but in a natural way, even as an artificer, though he can build an house with fit materials, yet he cannot produce the matter out of which he builds it; nor can he build it of matter unfit for his purpose, as water, fire, air, &c. All creatures act within their own sphere; that is, in a natural way: but creation is a supernatural work, and too great for a creature to perform; therefore creatures cannot be supposed to have made one another.

4. If it was supposed possible for one creature to make another, then superiors must have made inferiors; and so man, or some other intelligent creature, must have made the world: but where is the creature that ever pretended to this power or wisdom, so as to be called *the Creator of the ends of the earth*?

5. If any creature could make it self, or other creatures of the same species, why did he not preserve himself, for he that can give being to himself, can certainly continue himself in being? or why did he not make himself more perfect? Why did he make himself, and other creatures of the same species, in such a condition, that they are always indigent, or stand in need of support from other creatures?

Or further, supposing the creature made himself, and all other things, how comes it to pass that no one knows much of himself comparatively, or other things? Does not he that makes things understand them? therefore man could not make himself, or other creatures.

6. It follows therefore from hence, that there must be a God, who is the first cause of all things, necessarily existing, and not depending on the will of another, and by whose power all things exist; *Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things*^a. *In him we live and move, and have our being*^b.

Thus much concerning the more general method of reasoning, whereby the light of nature evinces the being of a God, we proceed,

II. To consider more particularly how

the being of God may be evinced from his works. The cause is known by its effects, since therefore, as was but now observed, creatures could not produce themselves, they must be created by one who is not a creature.

Now if there be no *medium* between God and the creature, or between infinite and finite, between a self-existent or un-derived, and a derived being; and if all creatures exist, as has been shewn, by the will and power of their creator, and so are finite and dependent, then it follows, that there is one from whom they derived their being, and on whom they depend for all things; that is, God. This is usually illustrated by this similitude. Suppose we were cast on an unknown island, and there saw houses built, but no men to inhabit them, should we not conclude there had been some there that built them? Could the stones and timber put themselves into that form in which they are? Or could the beasts of the field build them, that are without understanding? Or when we see a curious piece of workmanship, as a watch, or a clock, perform all its motions in a regular way, can we think the wheels came together by chance, should we not conclude that it was made by one of sufficient skill, to frame and put them together in that order, and give motion to them? *Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou, or thy work, he hath no hands*^c?

This leads us to consider the wisdom of God in his works, which demonstrates his being. This the Psalmist mentions with admiration^d, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all*. When we see letters put together, which make words or sentences, and these a book, containing the greatest sense, and the *Ideas* joined together in the most beautiful order, should we not conclude that some man, equal to this work, had put them together? Even so the wisdom, that shines forth in all the parts of the creation, proves that there is a God. This appears,

In the exact harmony and subserviency of one part of the creation to another^e, *I will bear, saith the Lord; I will bear the heavens, and they shall bear the earth. And the earth shall bear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall bear Jezreel*. One part of this frame of nature ministers to another. Thus the sun,

^a Rom. xi. 36.

^b Acts xvii. 28.

^c Isai. xlv. 9.

^d Psal. civ. 24.

^e Hos. ii. 21, 22.

The Being of God proved from his Works. 9

and other heavenly bodies, give light to the world, which would be no better than a cave or dungeon without them; and afford life and influence to plants and trees; and maintain the life of all living creatures. The clouds send down rain that moistens the earth, and makes it fruitful; and this is not poured forth by whole oceans together, but by small drops ^x, *He maketh small the drops of water; they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof*; and these are not perpetual, for that would tend to its destruction. The moist places of the earth, and the sea supply the clouds with water, that they may have a sufficient store to return again to it. The air fans and refreshes the earth, and is necessary for the growth of all things, and the maintaining the life and health of those that dwell therein. This subserviency of one thing to another is without their own design or contrivance; for they are not endowed with understanding or will, neither doth this depend on the will of the creature. The sun doth not enlighten or give warmth to the world, or the clouds or air refresh the earth at our pleasure; and therefore all this is subject to the order and direction of one who is the God of nature, who commands the sun, and it shineth, and the clouds to give rain at his pleasure. 'Tis he that gave the regular motion to the heavenly bodies, and, by his wisdom, fixed and continues the various seasons of the year, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, day and night, and every thing that tends to the beauty and harmony of nature; therefore these curious, and never-enough to be admired, works, plainly declare that there is a God. This is described with unparallel'd elegance of stile ^y; *Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north. By the breath of God, frost is given; and the breadth of the waters is straitned. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth his bright cloud. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south-wind?*

But that we may farther evince this truth, we shall lay down the following arguments to prove the being of a God, which appears,

I. From those creatures that are endow'd with a lower kind of life than man.

1. No creature can produce a fly or the least insect, but according to the fixed laws of nature; and that which we call life, or the principle of their respective motion and actions, none but a God can give; so that his being is plainly proved, from all living creatures below man, which are subservient, many of them, to one another, and all to man, and that not by our ordering; therefore this is done by the hand of him who is the God of nature.

2. The natural instinct of living creatures, every one acting according to its kind; and some of the smallest creatures producing things that no human art can imitate, plainly proves a God. Thus the bird in building its nest; the spider in framing its web; the bee in providing store-houses for its honey; and the ant in those provisions which it lays up in summer against winter; the silk-worm in providing cloathing for man, and in being transformed into various shapes, and many others of the smaller sort of creatures, that act in a wonderful way, without the exercise of reason or design, these all prove the being of God.

3. The greater, fiercer, or more formidable sort of living creatures, as the lion, tiger, and other beasts of prey, are so ordered, that they fly from man, whom they could easily devour, and avoid those cities and places where men inhabit, that so we may dwell safely. They are not chased into the woods by us; but these are allotted, as the places of their residence, by the God of nature.

4. Those living creatures that are most useful to men, and so subject to them, viz. the horse, camel, and many others, these know not their own strength, or power, to resist or rebel against them, which is ordered by infinite wisdom: and there are many other instances of the like nature, all which are very strong arguments to prove that there is a God, whose Glory shines forth in all his works.

II. From the structure of human bodies, in which respect we are said to be fearfully and wonderfully made; this, if it be abstractly considered without regard to the fixed course and laws of nature, exceeds the power and skill of all creatures, and can be no other than the workmanship of a God, and therefore is a demonstration of his being and perfections. No man ever pretended to give a specimen of his skill therein. The

^x Job xxxvi. 27.

^y Job xxxvii. 9, &c.

TO *The Being of God proved from his Works.*

finest statuaries or limners, who have imitated or given a picture, or representation of human bodies, have not pretended to give life or motion to them, herein their skill is baffled. The wisest men in the world have confessed their ignorance of the way and manner of the formation of human bodies; how they are framed in their first rudiments, preserved and grow to perfection in the womb, and how they are increased, nourished, and continued in their health, strength, and vigour, for many years. This has made the inquiries of the most thoughtful men issue in admiration: herein we plainly see the power and wisdom of God, to which alone 'tis owing.

Here it may be observed, that there are several things very wonderful in the structure of human bodies, which farther evince this truth. As,

- (1.) The organs of sense and speech.
- (2.) The circulation of the blood, and the natural heat which is preserved for many years together, of which there is no instance but in living creatures. Even fire will consume and waste its self by degrees, and all things, which have only acquired heat, will soon grow cold; but the natural heat of the body of man is preserved in it as long as life is continued.
- (3.) The continual supply of animal spirits, and their subserviency to sense and motion.
- (4.) The nerves, which, though small as threads, remain unbroken, though every one of these small fibres performs its office, and tends to convey strength and motion to the body.
- (5.) The situation of the parts in their most proper place: the internal parts, which would be ruined and destroyed if exposed to the injuries that the external ones are, these are secured in proper inclosures, and so preserved ^a, *Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.*
- (6.) All the parts of the body are so disposed, that they are fitted for their respective uses, as being situated in those places which render them most fit to perform their proper actions.
- (7.) The differing features of different bodies, so that we scarce see persons in all respects alike, is wonderful, and the result of divine wisdom, for even this is necessary for society and our performing the duties we owe to one another.
- (8.) The union of this body with the soul, which is a spirit of a very different

nature, can never be sufficiently admired or accounted for; but gives us occasion herein to own a superior, infinitely wise being. Which leads us,

III. To consider how the being of God may be evinced from the nature of the soul of man. He is said ^b, *To have formed the spirit of man within him.* And hereby his power and wisdom, and consequently his being, is declared. For,

1. The nature of a spiritual substance is much less known than that of bodies; and therefore that which we cannot fully understand, we must admire.

If the wisdom and power of God is visible in the structure of our bodies, it is much more so in the formation of our souls; and since we cannot fully describe what they are, and know little of them but by their effects, certainly we could not form them; and therefore there is a God, who is the *Father of spirits.*

2. The powers and capacities of the soul are various, and very extensive.

(1.) It can frame *Ideas* of things superior to its own nature, and can employ its self in contemplating and beholding the order, beauty and connection of all those things in the world, which are, as it were, a book, in which we may read the divine perfections, and improve them to the best purposes.

(2.) It takes in the vast compass of things past, which it can reflect on and remember, with satisfaction, or regret: and it can look forward to things to come, which it can expect, and accordingly conceive pleasure or uneasiness in the fore thoughts thereof.

(3.) It can chuse or embrace what is good, or fly from and reject what is evil and hurtful to it.

(4.) It is capable of moral government, of conducting its self according to the principles of reason, and certain rules enjoined it for the attaining the highest end.

(5.) It is capable of religion, and so can argue that there is a God, and give him the glory that is due to his name, and be happy in the enjoyments of him.

(6.) It is immortal, and therefore cannot be destroyed by any creature; for none but God has an absolute sovereignty over the spirits of men; *No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death^c.*

^a Job x. 11.

^b Zach. xii. 1.

^c Eccles. viii. 8.

IV. From the nature and office of conscience, which is that whereby the soul takes a view of its self, and its own actions, as good or evil; and considers its self as under a law to a superior being, from whom it expects rewards or punishments; and this evidently proves a God. For,

1. Conscience is oftentimes distressed or comforted by its reflection on those actions, which no man on earth can know: and therefore when it fears punishment for those crimes, which come not under the cognifance of human laws, the uneasiness that it finds in its self, and its dread of punishment, plainly discovers that it is apprehensive of a divine being, who has been offended, whose wrath and resentment it fears. All the endeavours that men can use to bribe, blind, or stupify their consciences, will not prevent these fears; but the sad apprehension of deserved punishment, from one whom they conceive to know all things, even the most secret crimes committed, this makes persons uneasy, whether they will or no. Whithersoever they fly, or what amusement soever they betake themselves to, conscience will still follow them with its accusations and dread of the divine wrath, *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest^a. A dreadful sound is in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him^c. Terrors take hold of him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east-wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand^d. The wicked flee when no man pursueth^e.*

And this is universal, there are none but are, some time or other, liable to these fears, arising from self-reflection, and the dictates of conscience; the most advanced circumstances in the world will not fortify against, or deliver from them^h; *As Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled. Even Pharaoh himself, the most hardhearted sinner in the world, who would feign have forced a belief upon himself that there is no God, and boldly said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? yet he could not ward off the conviction that there is a God, which his own conscience suggested. Therefore he was forced to sayⁱ, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people*

are wicked. And indeed all the pleasures that any can take in the world, who give themselves up to the most luxurious way of living, cannot prevent their trembling, when conscience suggests some things terrible to them for their sins. Thus *Belshazzar*, when in the midst of his jollity and drinking wine, having made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and when he saw the finger of a man's hand upon the wall, it is said^k, *The king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him; so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.*

Thus concerning those dictates of conscience, which make men very uneasy, whereby wicked men are forced to own that there is a God, whether they will or no; we now proceed to consider good men, as having frequently such serenity of mind and peace of conscience, as affords them farther matter of conviction concerning this truth. It is, indeed, a privilege that they enjoy, who have the light of scripture-revelation, and so it might have been considered under a following head; but since it is opposed to what was but now brought, as a proof of the being of a God, we may here observe, that some have that composure of mind, in believing and walking closely with God, as tends to confirm them yet more in this truth. For,

(1.) This composure of mind abides under all the troubles and disappointments they meet with in the world: those things which tend to disturb the peace of other men, do not so much affect them; *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord^l.* And as this peace abides under all the troubles of life, so it does not leave them, but is sometimes more abundant when they draw nigh to death.

(2.) It is a regular and orderly peace that they have, accompanied with grace, so that conscience is most quiet when the soul is most holy; which shews that there is a hand of God in working or speaking this peace, as designing thereby to encourage and own that grace which he has wrought in them^m; thus *the God of hope is said to fill us with all joy and peace in believing.*

(3.) Let them labour never so much after it, they can never attain this peace, without a divine intimation, or God's speaking peace to their souls; therefore when he is pleased, for wise ends, to

^a Isai. lvii. 20.

^c Job xv. 21.

^d Job xxvii. 20, 21, 22.

^e Prov. xxviii. 1.

^h Acts xxiv. 25.

Exod. ix. 27.

^k Dan. v. 6.

^l Psal. cxii. 7.

^m Rom. xv. 13.

withdraw from them, they are destitute of it; so that God is hereby known by his works, or by those influences of his grace, whereby he gives peace to conscience.

V. The being of a God appears from those vast and boundless desires, which are implanted in the soul; so that it can take up its rest, and meet with full satisfaction, in nothing short of a being of infinite perfection, therefore there is such a one, which is God. This will further appear if we consider,

1. We find, by experience, that though the soul, at present, be entertained, and meets with some satisfaction in creature-enjoyments, yet it still craves and desires more, of what kind soever they be; and the reason is, because they are not commensurate to its desires; *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing*^a. *That which is wanting cannot be numbered*^o.

2. We cannot rationally suppose that such boundless desires should be implanted in the soul, and yet that there should be nothing sufficient to satisfy them; for then the most excellent creature in this lower world would be, in some respects, more miserable than other creatures of a lower order, which obtain their ultimate desire. Thus the *Psalmist*, speaking of the brute creatures, says^p, *They are filled with good*; that is, they have all that they crave. Therefore,

3. There must be one that is infinitely good, who can satisfy these desires, considered in their utmost extent, and that is God, the fountain of all blessedness.

VI. The being of a God may be farther evinced, from the consent of all nations, to this truth. Now that which all mankind agrees in, must be founded in the nature of man, and that which is so, is evident from the light of nature. It is true, there are many who have thus *known God, who have not worshipped and glorified him as God; but have been vain in their imaginations, and have changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator*, as the Apostle says^q: But it don't follow from hence, that the heathen, who were guilty of idolatry, had no notion of a God in general, but rather the contrary; that there is something in the nature of man, which suggests, that they ought to worship some divine being,

whom they could not, by the light of nature, sufficiently know, and therefore they did service to those who were by nature no Gods; however, this proves that they were not wholly destitute of some *Ideas* of a God, which therefore are common to all mankind. Now that all nations have had some discerning that there is a God, appears,

1. From the credit that is to be given to all ancient history; which sufficiently discovers that men, in all ages, have owned and worshipped something that they called a God, though they knew not the true God.

2. The Heathens themselves, as may easily be understood from their own writings, reckoned atheism a detestable crime, for this reason, because contrary to the light of nature; and therefore some of them have asserted, that there is no nation in the world so barbarous, and void of reason, as to have no notion of a God.

3. We may consider also, that no changes in the world, or in the circumstances of men, have wholly erased this principle, whatever changes there have been in the external modes of worship, or in those things which have been received by tradition, still this principle has remained unalterable, that there is a God. Therefore the being of a God may be proved by the consent of all nations.

Object. 1. But it is objected to this, that there have been some speculative atheists in the world. History gives us an account of this; and we are informed, that there are some whole countries in *Africa* and *America* where there is no worship, and, as to what appears to us, no notion of a God. Therefore the being of a God cannot be proved by the consent of all nations.

Answer. 1. As to the first branch of this objection, that there have been some speculative atheists in the world; it is true, history furnishes us with instances of persons who have been deemed so, yet their number has been very inconsiderable; so that it will not follow from hence, that the *Idea* of a God is not, some way or other, impressed upon the heart of man. Might it not as well be said, that, because some few are born ideots, that therefore reason is not natural to man, or universal? And it may be farther observed, that they who are branded with the character of atheists in ancient history, or such as appear to be atheists in our day by their conversation, are rather practical

^a Eccles. i. 8.

^o Ver. 15.

^p Psal. civ. 28.

^q Rom. i. 21, 25.

atheists than speculative. We do not deny, that many in all ages have, and now do, assert, and pretend to prove, that there is no God; but it is plain that they discover, at some times, such fear and distress of conscience, as is sufficient to disprove what they pretend to defend by arguments.

2. As to the second branch of the objection, that there are some parts of the world, where the people seem to be so stupid, as not to own or worship a God. This is hard to be proved; neither have any, that have asserted it, had that familiarity with them, as to be able to determine what their sentiments are about this matter.

But suppose it were true in fact, that some nations have no notion of a God or religion, nothing could be argued from it but that such nations are barbarous and brutish, and, though they have the principle of reason, do not act like reasonable creatures; and it is sufficient to our purpose to assert, that all men, acting like reasonable creatures, or who argue from those principles of reason, that they are born with, may from thence conclude that there is a God.

Object. 2. It is farther objected by atheists against the being of God, and indeed against all religion, which is founded thereon, that both one and the other, took its rise from human policy, that hereby the world, being amused with such-like speculations, might be restrained from those irregularities, which were inconsistent with the well-being of civil government; and that this was readily received, and propagated by tradition, and so by an implicit faith, transmitted from one generation to another among those who enquired not into the reason of what they believed; and that all this was supported by fear, which fixed their belief in this matter: so that human policy invented, tradition propagated, and fear rooted, in the minds of men, what we call the natural *Ideas* of God and religion.

Answer. This is a vile insinuation, but much in the mouths of atheists, without any shadow of reason, or attempt to prove it; and indeed it may be easily disproved. Therefore,

1. It appears that the notices we have of the being of a God, are not in the least founded in state policy, as a trick of men, to keep up some religion in the world, as necessary for the support of civil government. For,

If the notion of a God and religion, consequential hereon, were a contrivance of human policy, it would follow,

(1.) That it must be either the invention of one single man, or else it was the result of the contrivance of many convened together in a joint assembly of men, in confederacy, to impose on the world.

If it was the invention of one man, who was he? when and where did he live? What history gives the least account of him? or when was the world without all knowledge of a deity, and some religion, that we may know, at least, in what age this notion first sprang up, or was contrived? or could the contrivance of one man be so universally complied with, and yet none pretend to know who he was, or when he lived? And if it was the contrivance of a number of men convened together, how was this possible, and yet the thing not be discovered? or how could the princes of the earth, who were at the head of this contrivance, have mutual intelligence, or be convened together? By whose authority did they meet? or what was the occasion thereof?

(2.) It is morally impossible, that such a piece of state policy should be made use of to deceive the world, and universally take place, and yet none in any age ever discover the imposture. The world could never be so imposed on, and yet not know by whom; the plot would certainly have been confessed by some who were in the secret.

(3.) If human policy had first invented this notion, certainly the princes and great men of the world, who had a hand in it, would have exempted themselves from any obligation to own a God, or any form of worship, whereby they acknowledge him their superior; for impostors generally design to beguile others, but to exempt themselves from what they bind them to. If any of the princes, or great men of the world, had invented this opinion, that there is a God, and that he is to be worshipped, their pride would have led them to persuade the world that they were Gods themselves, and ought to be worshipped; they would never have included themselves in the obligation, to own a subjection to God, if the notion of a God had, for political ends, been invented by them.

(4.) If the belief of a God was invented by human policy, how came it to be universally received by the world?

E It

14 *The Being of God proved from his Works.*

It is certain, that it was not propagated by persecution; for though there has been persecution to enforce particular modes of worship, yet there never was any such method used to enforce the belief of a God, for that took place without any need thereof, it being instamped on the nature of man.

If therefore it was not propagated by force, neither was the belief of a God spread through the world by fraud, what are those arts which are pretended to have been used to propagate it? It took its rise, say they, from human policy; but the politicians not known, nor the arts they used to persuade the world that there is a God found out. How unreasonable therefore is this objection, or rather cavil, against a deity, when the atheists pretend that it was the result of human policy.

2. It appears that the belief of a God was not propagated in the world merely by tradition, and so received by implicit faith. For,

(1.) Those notions that have been received with implicit faith by tradition, from generation to generation, are not pretended to be proved by reason: but the belief of a God is founded on the highest reason; so that if no one in the world believed it besides my self, I am bound to believe it, or else must no longer lay claim to that reason which is natural to mankind, and should rather shew my self a brute than a man.

(2.) No schemes of religion, that were propagated merely by tradition, have been universally received, for tradition respects particular nations, or a particular set of men, who have propagated them. But (as has been before considered) the belief of a God has universally prevailed. Moreover, if the belief of a God was thus spread by tradition through the world, why was not the mode of worship settled, that so there might be but one religion in the world? The reason is, because their respective modes of worship were received, by the Heathen, by tradition; whereas the belief of a God was not so, but is rooted in the nature of man.

(3.) Whatever has been received only by tradition, has not continued in the world in all the turns, changes, and overthrow of particular nations, that received it; but the belief of a God has continued in the world throughout all the ages and changes thereof: therefore it is

not founded in tradition, but in the light of nature.

3. It appears, moreover, that the belief of a God could not take its first rise merely from fear of punishment, which men expected would be inflicted by him, though that be a strong argument to establish us in the belief thereof. For,

(1.) A liability to punishment for crimes committed, supposes that there is a God, who is offended by sin, and from whom punishment is expected. Therefore as the effect cannot give being to the cause, so fear could not be the first ground and reason of the belief of a God. But,

(2.) The principal *Idea* which mankind has of God, and that which is most natural to us, is, that of an infinitely amiable object, and so we conceive of him, as a being of infinite goodness, *God is love*. Thus we conceive of him, as the spring of all we enjoy and hope for; and as for fear, that is only what arises in the breasts of wicked men, and is founded in the secondary *Ideas* we have of him; to wit, as taking vengeance, supposing he is offended. But they who do not offend him are not afraid of his vengeance; and the sentiments of the worst of men are not to be our rule in judging concerning the being of a God. If these believe that there is a God, only because they fear him, others believe him to be the fountain of all blessedness, and as such they love him: therefore the *Ideas* that men have of the being of a God, did not take their rise from fear.

VII. The being of a God may be proved from the works of providence, whereby the world is governed, as well as preserved, from returning to its first nothing. It is that which supplies all creatures with those things that their respective natures or necessities require: creatures could no more provide for themselves than they could make themselves; therefore he that provides all things for them is God. All finite beings have their respective wants, whether they are sensible thereof or no; and he must be all-sufficient that can fill or supply the necessities of all things, and such a one is God.

Thus the *Psalmist* speaks of this God, as supplying the necessities of *beasts and creeping things*; who are said, *to wait upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season*.

* 1 John iv. 8.

f. Psal. civ. 25, 27. Psal. cxlv. 25, 16.

In considering the providence of God, whereby his being is evinced, we may observe,

1. The extraordinary dispensations thereof, when things happen contrary to the common course, and fixed laws of nature, as when miracles have been wrought. These are undeniable proofs of the being of a God; for herein a check or stop is put to the course of nature, the fixed order or laws thereof controuled or inverted; and this none can do but he who is the God and author thereof. To deny that miracles have been wrought, is little better than scepticism; since it hath been proved, by the most unquestionable testimony, contained not only in scripture, but in other writings, and is confessed, even by those who deny the principal things designed to be confirmed thereby. It is true, they were never wrought with an immediate design to prove that there is a God, since that is sufficiently demonstrated without them: but in as much as they have been wrought with other views, the being of a God, whose immediate power has been exerted therein, appears beyond all contradiction.

2. This may be proved from the common dispensations of providence, which we daily behold, and experience in the world.

These we call common, because they contain nothing miraculous, or contrary to the laws of nature: they are indeed wonderful, and have in them the traces and footsteps of infinite wisdom and sovereignty, and therefore prove that there is a God. For,

(1.) It cannot otherwise be accounted for, that so many things should befall us, or others in the world, that are altogether unlooked for. Thus one is cast down, and a blast thrown on all his endeavours, and another raised beyond his expectation; *Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

(2.) The wisest and best concerted schemes of men are often baffled, and brought to nought, by some unexpected occurrence of providence, which argues a divine controul, as God says, *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.* And who is it that can turn the counsels of men into foolishness, but an infinitely wise God.

VIII. The being of a God may be proved by the foretelling future events, which have come to pass accordingly. For,

1. No creature can, by his own wisdom or sagacity, foretel future contingent events with a certain peremptory and infallible knowledge, and not by mere conjecture; *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods.* And the reason is plain, because our knowledge reaches no farther than to see effects, and judge of them in and by their causes. Thus, may easily foretel that necessary causes will produce those effects that are agreeable to their nature: But when the effect is not necessary, but contingent, or purely arbitrary, then we have nothing to judge by, and therefore cannot come to the knowledge of things future, without an intimation given us thereof, by him who orders and disposes of all things, and that is God: and therefore to foretel things to come in this sense, is an evident proof of the being of God.

2. That there have been such predictions, and that the things foretold have come to pass accordingly, is very obvious from scripture: and if it be highly reasonable to believe that which is so well attested, as scripture is, we are bound from hence to conclude that there is a God.

But since we are arguing, at present, with those who deny a God, and consequently all scripture-revelation, we will only suppose that they whom we contend with will allow that some contingent events have been foretold; and then it will follow, that this could be done no other way, but by some intimation from one that is omniscient, and that is God.

IX. The being of a God appears from his providing for the necessities of all living. Here let us consider,

1. That there is a natural instinct, in all creatures, to take care of and provide for their young, before they are capable of providing for themselves. This is not only observable in mankind, as the prophet says, *Can a woman forget her sucking child,* but also in the lower sort of creatures; and among them in those who are naturally most fierce and savage, even they provide for their young with extraordinary diligence, and sometimes neglect, and almost starve, themselves to provide for them, and sometimes endanger their own lives to defend them.

* Psal. lxxv. 6, 7.

u 1 Cor. i. 19.

x Isai. xli. 23.

y Isai. xlix. 15.

16 *The Being of God proved from his Works.*

2. They bring forth their young at the most convenient season of the year, when the grass begins to spring to supply them with food, and when the fowls of the air may get a livelihood by picking up the seed that is sown, and not covered by the earth, and when the trees begin to put forth their fruits to supply and feed them.

3. When they bring forth their young, there is a providence that provides the breast, the paps, the udder replenished with milk to feed them; and there is a natural instinct in their young, without instruction, to desire to receive their nourishment that way.

4. Providence has furnished many of the beasts of the field with weapons for their defence, and has given others a natural swiftness to fly from danger, and has provided holes and caverns in the earth to secure them from those that pursue them. And this cannot be the effect of mere chance, but it is an evident proof of the being of a God.

5. Providence is, in a peculiar manner, concerned for the supply of man, the noblest of all creatures in the world; *He giveth food to all flesh^a. Thou preservest man and beast^a.* The earth is stored with variety of food; and whereas the poor, which is the greater part of mankind, cannot purchase those far-fetched, or costly dainties, which are the support of luxury, these may, by their industry, provide that food which is most common, and with which the earth is plentifully stored, whereby their lives and health are as well maintained, as the rich, who fare deliciously every day; and if their families increase, and a greater number is to be provided for, they generally have a supply in proportion to their increasing number.

6. Providence has stored the earth with various medicines, and given skill to men to use them as a relief against the many sicknesses that we are exposed to. All these things, and innumerable other instances that might be given, argue the care and bounty, and consequently prove the being of God, whose tender mercies are over all his works.

Here let us consider how the providence of God provides for the safety of man, against those things that threaten his ruin.

The contrariety and opposition of things one to another would bring with them inevitable destruction, did not providence prevent it. As,

(1.) Those things, which are the greatest blessings of nature, would be destructive, were there not a providence: as the Sun, that enlightens and cherishes the world by its heat and influence, would be of no advantage, were it situate at too great a distance, and would burn it up if it were too near. So the sea would swallow up, and bring a deluge on the earth, if God had not, by his decree, fixed it within certain bounds, and made the shore an inclosure to it, and said hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.

(2.) The elements are advantageous to us, by their due temperature and mixture; but, were it otherwise, they would be destructive. So the various humours and jarring principles in our bodies would tend to destroy us, but that they are so mixed, as the God of nature has tempered and disposed them, for the preservation of life and health.

(3.) The wild beasts would destroy us, had not God put the fear and dread of man into them, or, at least, caused them not to desire to be where men live; the forests and desert places, remote from cities, being allotted for them; and some creatures would be destructive to men, by the encrease of their number, did they not devour one another. And insects would destroy the fruits of the earth, did not one season of the year help forward their destruction, as another tends to breed them.

(4.) Men, by reason of their contrary tempers and interests, and that malice and envy, which is the consequence of our first apostacy, would destroy one another, if there were not a providence that restrains them, and gives a check to that wickedness that is natural to them, whereby the world is kept in a greater measure of peace than otherwise it would be; hence, the Psalmist says^b, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

Object. It is objected, by atheists, against the being of a God, that the wicked are observed to prosper in the world, and the righteous are oppressed. This temptation the Psalmist was almost overcome by; as he says, *my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked^c.*

Answer. To this it may be answered,

1. That the *Idea* of infinite sovereignty is included in that of a God; and this distribution of good and evil, if made at

^a Psal. cxxxvi. 25.

^a Psal. xxxvi. 6.

^b Psal. lxxvi. 10.

^c Psal. lxxiii. 2, 3.

any time, without regard to the deserts of men, argues the sovereignty of providence; and therefore proves that there is a God, who gives no account of his matters, but has an absolute right to do what he will with his own.

2. There is a display of infinite wisdom in these dispensations of providence, in that the good man is made better by affliction, as hereby the kindness and care of providence appears; and the wicked man is forced to own, by his daily experience, that all the outward blessings he enjoys in this world, cannot make him easy or happy, or be a sufficient portion for him.

3. Outward prosperity don't prevent or remove inward remorse, or terror of conscience, which embitters the joys of the wicked; *A dreadful sound is in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him^d. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness^e.* And, on the other hand, outward trouble in the godly is not inconsistent with spiritual joy and inward peace, which is more than a ballance for all the distresses they labour under; it is said, *The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy^f. He shall be satisfied from himself^g.*

4. We are not to judge of things according to their present appearance, when we determine a person happy or miserable, but are to consider the end thereof, since every thing is well that ends well. Thus the Psalmist, who, as was before observed, was staggered at the prosperity of the wicked, had his faith established, by considering the different events of things. Concerning the wicked, he says^h, *Thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image;* which is a very beautiful expression, representing all their happiness as imaginary, a vain dream, and such as is worthy to be contemn'd: but as for the righteous, he represents them as under the special *protection and guidance of God here, and at last received to glory, and there enjoying him as their everlasting portion.*

Having considered how the light of na-

ture, and the works of God prove his being, we shall proceed to shew how this appears from scripture, as it is observed in this answer, that the word and spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation. The arguments hitherto laid down are directed more especially to those who are not convinced that there is a God, and consequently deny the divine original of scripture: but this argument supposes a conviction of both; but yet it must not be supposed unnecessary, in as much as we are oftentimes exposed to many temptations, which tend to stagger our faith; so that though we may not peremptorily deny that there is a God, yet we may desire some additional evidence of his being and perfections, beyond what the light of nature affords; and this we have in scripture. Herein the glory of God shines forth with the greatest lustre, and we have an account of works more glorious than those of nature, included in the way of salvation by a Mediator. The light of nature, indeed, proves that there is a God; but the word of God discovers him to us as a reconciled God and Father to all who believe, and is also attended with those internal convictions and evidences of this truth, which are the peculiar gifts and graces of the holy spirit; and therefore it is well observed, that this knowledge only is sufficient and effectual to salvation; which leads us to consider the insufficiency of the light of nature to answer this end. The knowledge of God, that may be attained thereby, is sufficient, indeed, in some measure, to restrain our corrupt passions, and it is conducive to the peace and welfare of civil societies: it affords some conviction of sin, and, in some respects, leaves men without excuse, and renders their condemnation less aggravated than that of those who sin against gospel light; but yet it is insufficient to salvation, since it is a truth of universal extent, that *there is salvation in no other, but in Christⁱ; and that it is life eternal to know not only the true God, but Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent^k*; and this cannot be known by the light of nature, but by divine revelation; which leads us to consider in what respect the knowledge of God, as it is contained in and derived from scripture, is sufficient to salvation.

Here we don't assert the sufficiency thereof, exclusive of the aids of divine

^d Job xv. 21.
ⁱ Acts iv. 12.

^e Prov. xiv. 13.
^k John xvii. 3.

^f Prov. xiv. 10.

^g Ver. 14.

^h Psal. lxxiii. 18, 19, 20.

grace, so as to oppose the word to the Spirit: therefore it is said, in this answer, that the word and Spirit of God alone can reveal him to men sufficiently to their salvation. The word is a sufficient rule, so that we need no other to be a standard of our faith, and to direct us in the way to eternal life; but it is the Spirit that enables us to regard, understand and apply this rule, and to walk according to it: these two are not to be separated; the spirit doth not save any without the word, and the word is not effectual to salvation, unless made so by the Spirit.

That nothing short of scripture-revelation is sufficient to salvation, will appear, if we compare it with the natural knowledge we have of God. For,

1. Though the light of nature shews us that there is a God, it don't fully display his perfections, so as they are manifested in scripture, wherein God is beheld in the face of Christ.

2. Neither doth it discover any thing of the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the divine essence, who are equally the object of faith; nor doth it give us any intimation of Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, in whom we obtain forgiveness of sins: this is known only by scripture-revelation; therefore, since this is necessary to salvation, we are bound to conclude that the scripture alone is sufficient to lead to it.

3. The light of nature suggests, it is true, that God is to be worshipped; but there is an instituted way of worshipping him, which depends wholly on divine revelation; and since this is necessary, it proves the necessity of scripture.

4. There is no salvation without communion with God; or he that does not enjoy him here, shall not enjoy him for ever hereafter. Now the enjoyment of God is what we attain by faith, which is founded on scripture. Thus the Apostle says ¹, *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

But since it is one thing to say, that the knowledge of God, which is derived from scripture, is sufficient to salvation in an objective way; that is, that it is a sufficient rule to lead us to salvation, and another thing to say, that it is made effectual thereunto. We are now to enquire when it is made so. In answer to which, let us consider that the doctrines

contained in scripture are made effectual to salvation; not by all the skill or wisdom of men representing them in their truest light, nor by all the power of reasoning, which we are capable of, without the aids of divine grace, but they are made effectual by the Spirit; and this he does,

(1.) By the internal illumination of the mind, giving a *spiritual discerning* of divine truth, which the *natural man receiveth not*, as the Apostle says ^m; and it is called ⁿ, *a shining into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*

(2.) By subduing the obstinate will of man, and so enabling it to yield a ready, chearful and universal obedience to the divine commands contained in scripture; and, in particular, enclining it to own Christ's authority as king of saints; and to say, as converted Paul did, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

(3.) He works upon our affections, exciting in us holy desires after God and Christ, and a very high esteem and value for divine truth, and removes all those prejudices which there are in our minds against it, opens and enlarges our hearts to receive the word, and comply with all the commands thereof, thus ^p, *The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.* So David prays ^q, *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!*

QUEST. III. *What is the word of God?*

ANSW. The holy scriptures of the old and new testament are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

IN speaking to this answer, we shall consider the several names by which the scripture is set forth, with the import thereof, and more particularly that by which it is most known; to wit, the old and new testament, and then speak of it as a rule of faith and obedience.

I. There are several names given to the word of God, in *Psalms* cxix. one of which is found in almost every verse thereof.

¹ 1 John i. 3. ^m 1 Cor. ii. 14. ⁿ 2 Cor. iv. 6. ^o Acts ix. 6. ^p Acts xvi. 14. ^q Psal. cxix. 18. compared with v. 5.

SCRIPTURE a Rule of Faith and Obedience. 19

It is sometimes called his law, statutes, precepts, commandments or ordinances, to signify his authority and power to demand obedience of his creatures, which he does therein, and shews us in what particular instances, and how we are to yield obedience to it.

It is also called his judgments, implying that he is the great judge of the world, and that he will deal with men in a judicial way, according to their works, as agreeable or disagreeable to this law of his, contained in his word; and, for this reason, it is also called his righteousness, because all that he commands in his word is holy and just, and his service highly reasonable.

It is also called God's testimonies, as containing the witness, evidence or record, that he has given to his own perfections, whereby he has demonstrated them to the world. Thus we are said ^a, *To behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.*

It is also called his way, as containing a declaration of the glorious works that he has done, both of nature and grace; the various methods of his dealing with men, or the way that they should walk in, which leads to eternal life.

Moreover, it is called ^r, *The oracles of God*, to denote that many things contained in it could not have been known by us till he was pleased to reveal them therein. Agreeably hereto, the Apostle speaks of the great things contained in the gospel, as being hid in God; hid from ages and generations past, but now made manifest to the saints ^f.

Again, it is sometimes called the gospel, especially those parts of scripture which contain the glad tidings of salvation by Christ, or the method which God ordained for the taking away the guilt, and subduing the power of sin; and particularly the Apostle calls it, *The glorious gospel of the blessed God* ^r; and *the gospel of our salvation* ^u.

And, in this answer, it is called the old and new testament; that part of it which was written before our Saviour's incarnation, which contains a relation of God's dealings with his church, from the beginning of the world to that time, or a prediction of what should be fulfilled in following ages, is called the old testament. The other, which contains an account of God's dispensation of grace, from Christ's first to his second coming, is called the new.

A testament is the declared or written will of a person, in which some things are given to those who are concerned or described therein. Thus the scripture is God's written will or testament, containing an account of what he has freely given in his covenant of grace to fallen man; and this is the principal subject matter of scripture, as a testament; therefore it contains an account,

1. Of many valuable legacies given to the heirs of salvation; the blessings of both worlds, all the privileges contained in those great and precious promises, with which the scripture so abounds. Thus it is said; *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory* ^x; and *the Lord will give grace and glory* ^y.

2. It describes the testator Christ, who gives eternal life to his people, and confirms all the promises which are made in him; as they are said ^z, *To be in him yea and amen, to the glory of God*; and more especially he ratified this testament by his death, as the same Apostle observes, which is a known maxim of the civil law, that *where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator* ^a, upon which the force or validity thereof depends. And the word of God gives us a large account how all the blessings, which God bestowed upon his people, receive their validity from the death of Christ.

3. It also discovers to us who are the heirs, or legatees, to whom these blessings are given, who are described therein, as repenting, believing, returning sinners, who may lay claim to the blessings of the covenant of grace.

4. It has several seals annexed to it, viz. the sacraments under the old and new testament, of which we have a particular account in scripture.

This leads us to consider how the scripture is otherwise divided or distinguished.

(1.) As to the old testament, it is sometimes distinguished or divided into Moses and the prophets ^b; or Moses, the prophets, and the psalms ^c. And it may be considered also, as containing historical and prophetick writings, and others that are more especially doctrinal or poetical; and the prophets may be considered as to the time when they wrote, some before and others after the captivity. They may also be distinguished as to the subject matter of them: some contain a very clear and particular account of the person

^a 2 Cor. iii. 18.

^r Rom. iii. 2.

^f Ephes. iii. 9.

Colos. i. 26.

^u 1 Tim. i. 11.

^u Eph. i. 13.

^x Psal. lxxiii. 24.

^y Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

^z 2 Cor. i. 20.

^a Heb. ix. 16, 17.

^b Luke xvi. 29.

^c Luke xxiv. 44.

and

20 SCRIPTURE a Rule of Faith and Obedience.

and kingdom of Christ, viz. *Isaiab* who is, for this reason, by some, called the Evangelical Prophet. Others contain reproofs, and denounce and lament approaching Judgments, as the prophet *Jeremiah*. Others encourage the building of the temple, the setting up the worship of God, and the reformation of the people upon their return from captivity: thus *Zechariah* and *Haggai*. As for the historical parts of scripture, these either contain an account of God's dealings with his people before the captivity; as *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, &c. or, after it, as *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*.

(2.) The books of the new testament may be thus divided. Some of them are historical, viz. such as contain the life and death of our Saviour, as the four gospels, or the ministry of the Apostles, and the first planting and spreading of the gospel, as the *Acts of the Apostles*. Others are more especially doctrinal, and are wrote in the form of an epistle by the Apostle *Paul*, and some other of the Apostles.

One book is prophetical, as the *Revelations*, wherein is foretold the different state and condition of the church, the persecutions it should meet with from its Anti-christian enemies, its final victory over them, and its triumphs, as reigning with Christ in his kingdom.

This leads us to consider, when God first revealed his will to man in scripture, and how this *Revelation* was gradually enlarged, as transmitted down to the church in succeeding ages.

There was no written word, from the beginning of the world, till *Moses's* time, which was between two and three thousand years; and it was almost a thousand years longer before the canon of the old testament was compleated by *Malachi* the last prophet, and some hundred years after that before the canon of the new testament was given; so that God revealed his will, as the Apostle says, in the beginning of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, at sundry times, as well as in divers manners, and by divers inspired writers.

Notwithstanding the church, before it had a written word, was not destitute of a rule of faith and obedience, neither were they unacquainted with the way of salvation; for to suppose this would be greatly to detract from the glory of the divine government, and reflect on God's goodness; therefore he took other ways to supply the want of a

written word, and hereby shewed his sovereignty, in that he can make known his will what way he pleases, and his wisdom and goodness, in giving his written word at such a time when the necessities of men most required it. This will appear, if we consider,

1. That when there was no written word, the Son of God frequently condescended to appear himself, and converse with man, and so revealed his mind and will to him.

2. There was the ministry of Angels subservient to this end, in which respect the word was often spoken by Angels, sent to instruct men in the mind and will of God.

3. The church had among them all this while, more or less, the spirit of prophecy, whereby many were instructed in the mind of God; and though they were not commanded to commit what they received by inspiration to writing, yet they were hereby furnished to instruct others in the way of salvation. Thus *Enoch* is said to have prophesied in his days^a; and *Noah* is called, a preacher of righteousness^c.

4. Great part of this time the lives of men were very long, (viz.) eight or nine hundred years, and so the same persons might transmit the word of God by their own living testimony.

5. Afterwards, in the latter part of this interval of time, when there was no written word, the world apostatised from God, and almost all flesh corrupted their way; not for want of a sufficient rule of obedience, but through the perverseness and depravity of their natures, and afterwards the world was almost wholly sunk into idolatry, and so were judicially excluded from God's special care; and since *Abraham's* family was the only church that remained in the world, God continued to communicate to them the knowledge of his will in those extraordinary ways, as he had done to the faithful in former ages.

6. When man's life was shortned and reduced to the same standard, as now it is, of threescore and ten years, and the church was very numerous, increased to a great nation, and God had promised that he would increase them yet more, then they stood in greater need of a written word to prevent the inconveniences that might have arisen from their continuing any longer without one, and God thought fit, as a great instance of favour to man, to command *Moses* to write his law, as a

^a Jude 14, 15.

^c 2 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xi. 7.

standing rule of faith and obedience to his church.

This leads us to consider a very important question, *viz.* whether the church, under the old testament dispensation, understood this written word, or the spiritual meaning of those laws that are contained therein? Some, indeed, have thought that the state of the church, before Christ came in the flesh, was attended with so much darkness, that they did not know the way of salvation, though they had, in whole or in part, the scriptures of the old testament. The papists generally assert, that they did not; and therefore they fancy, that all who lived before Christ's time, were shut up in a prison, where they remained till he went from the cross to reveal himself to them, and so, as their leader, to conduct them in triumph to heaven. And some protestants think the state of all, who lived in those times, to have been attended with so much darkness, that they knew but little of Christ and his gospel, though shadowed forth, or typified by the ceremonial law, which they found on such-like places of scripture as that, where *Moses* is said to have put a vail over his face; that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished; and that this vail is done away in Christ^f; and those scriptures that speak of the Jewish dispensation, as a night of darkness; compared with that of the gospel, which is represented as a perfect day, or the rising of the sun^g. And as these extend the darkness of that dispensation farther than, as I humbly conceive, they ought to do, so they speak more of the wrath, bondage and terror that attended it, than they have ground to do, especially when they make it universal, since there are several reasons, which may induce us to believe that the church at that time understood a great deal more of the gospel, shadowed forth in the ceremonial law, and had more communion with God, and less wrath, terror or bondage, than these suppose they had; for which I would offer the following reasons,

1. Some of the old testament saints have expressed a great degree of faith in Christ, and love to him, whom they expected to come in our nature; and many of the prophets, in their inspired writings, have discovered that they were not strangers to the way of redemption and recon-

ciliation to God by him, as the Lord our righteousness. A multitude of scriptures might be cited, that speak of Christ, and salvation by him, in the old testament^h; thus *Abraham* is described, as *rejoycing to see his day*ⁱ; and the prophet *Isaiah* is so very particular and express in the account he gives of his person and offices, that I cannot see how any one can reasonably conclude him to have been wholly a stranger to the gospel himself^k. Can any one think this, who reads his liii^d chapter, where he treats of his life, death, sufferings and offices, and of the way of salvation by him?

Object. It is objected hereunto that the prophets who delivered these evangelical truths, understood but little of them themselves, because of the darkness of the dispensation they were under. Thus it is said^l, that the prophets, indeed, searched into the meaning of their own predictions, but to no purpose; for it was revealed to them, that not unto themselves, but unto us they ministered; that is, the account they gave of our Saviour was not designed to be understood by them, but us in this present gospel-dispensation.

Ans. The answer that may be given to this objection is, that though the prophets are represented as enquiring into the meaning of their own prophecies, yet it doth not follow from thence that they had but little or no understanding of them: all that can be gathered from it is, that they studied them, as their own salvation was concerned therein; but we must not suppose that they did this to no purpose, as what they were not able to understand; and when it is farther said in this scripture, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things that are now reported; the meaning is, not that they did not understand those things, or had not much concern in them, but that the glory of the gospel state, that was foretold in their prophecies, was what we should behold with our eyes, and not they themselves, in which sense they are said not to minister to themselves, but to us; so that this objection hath no force in it to overthrow the argument we are maintaining, we therefore proceed,

2. It is certain, that the whole ceremonial law had a spiritual meaning annexed to it; for it is said, *That the law was a shadow of good things to come*^m; and that all those things happened to them for en-

^f 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.

^g 1, 2. compared with Rom. iv. 6.

^h Heb. x. 1.

ⁱ Isa. xxi. 11. Cant. ii. 17.

^j John viii. 56.

^k Malach. iv. 2.

^l Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zech. xiii. 7. Psal. xxxii.

^m Isa. xxii. 25. and Chap. lii. 13, 14, 15.

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 10.

22 SCRIPTURE a Rule of Faith and Obedience.

*samples [or types] and they are written for our admonition*ⁿ.

3. It is unreasonable to suppose that the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial law should not be known by those to whom it was principally given; or that the gospel, wrapt up therein, should not be seen through this shadow till the dispensation was abolished, the ceremonial law abrogated, and the nation cast off to whom it was given.

4. If the knowledge of the gospel, or faith in Christ, which is founded upon it, be necessary for our salvation, it was necessary for the salvation of those who lived in former ages; for it was as much a truth then as it is now, that there is salvation in no other; therefore the church of old were obliged to believe in him to come, as much as we are to believe in him as already come: but it is inconsistent with the divine goodness to require this knowledge, and not to give them any expedient to attain it; therefore we must either suppose this knowledge attainable by them, and consequently that he was revealed to them, or else they must be excluded from a possibility of salvation, when at the same time, they were obliged to believe in Christ, which they could not do, because they did not understand the meaning of that law, which was the only means of revealing him to them; or if Christ was revealed in the ceremonial law, and they had no way to understand it, it is all one as though he had not been revealed therein.

5. They had sufficient helps for the understanding the spiritual meaning thereof, viz. not only some hints of explication, given in the old testament, but, besides these, there was,

(1.) Extraordinary revelation and inspiration, with which the *Jewish* church, more or less, was favoured, almost throughout all ages thereof; and hereby it is more than probable that, together with the canon of the old testament, they received the spiritual sense and meaning of those things which were contained therein.

(2.) There was one whole tribe, viz. that of *Levi*, that was almost wholly employed in studying and explaining the law of God, therefore 'tis said, *They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law*^o; and that *the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth*^p; that is, the priests should, by all proper methods, understand the meaning of the law, that they might be able

to teach the people, when coming to be instructed by them.

(3.) There were among them several schools of the prophets (in some ages at least of the *Jewish* church) in which some had extraordinary revelations; and they that had them not, made the scriptures their study, that they might be able to instruct others; so that, from all this, it appears that they had a great deal of knowledge of divine truths, and the spiritual meaning of the old testament; though yet we will not deny that the gospel dispensation hath a clearer light, and excels in glory.

We shall now proceed to consider, how far the old testament is a rule of faith and obedience to us, though that dispensation be abolished; for we are not to reckon it an useless part of scripture, or that it does not at all concern us. Since,

(1.) The greatest part of the doctrines contained therein are of perpetual obligation to the church, in all the dispensations or changes thereof.

(2.) As for the ceremonial law, which is abolished, with some other forensick, or political laws, by which the *Jews*, in particular, were governed, these, indeed, are not so far a rule of obedience to us, as that we should think our selves obliged to observe them, as the *Jews* were of old; notwithstanding,

(3.) Even these are of use to us, as herein we see what was then the rule of faith and obedience to the church, and how far it agrees as to the substance thereof, or things signified thereby, with the present dispensation; so that it is of use to us, as herein we see the wisdom, sovereignty and grace of God to his church in former ages, and how what was then typified or prophesied, is fulfilled to us. Thus it is said, that *whatsoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope*^q.

The scriptures of the old and new testament contain a revelation of the whole mind and will of God, and therefore are justly styled a perfect rule of faith and obedience. Nevertheless,

We do not hereby intend that they contain an account of every thing that God hath done, or will do, in his works of providence and grace, from the beginning to the end of time; for such a large knowledge of things is not necessary for us to attain. Thus it is said^r, that Christ

ⁿ 1 Cor. x. 11.

^o Deut. xxxiii. 10.

^p Mal. ii. 7.

^q Rom. xv. 4.

^r John xx. 30.

did many *other signs*, that are not written in the gospel; but those things that are contained therein, are *written that we might believe*; therefore we have a sufficient account thereof to support our faith; and that *there were many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, the world would not contain the books that should be written*^c.

Nor do we understand hereby, that God has given us an account of all his secret counsels and purposes relating to the event of things, or the final estate of particular persons, abstracted from those marks on which our hope of salvation is founded, or their outward condition, or the good or bad success that shall attend their undertakings in the world, or the time of their living therein: these, and many more events of the like nature, are secrets which we are not to enquire into, God having not thought fit to reveal them in his word, for wise ends best known to himself, which shews his sovereignty, with respect to the matter of revelation; *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children*^d. When Peter was over curious in enquiring concerning the future estate or condition of John, our Saviour gives him this tacit reproof, *What is that to thee*^e?

Nor are we to suppose that the divine perfections, which are infinite, are fully and adequately revealed to man, since it is impossible that they should, from the nature of the thing; for that which is in it self incomprehensible, cannot be so revealed that we should be able fully to comprehend it, though that which is possible, or at least necessary, to be known of God, is clearly revealed to us.

Again, we do not suppose that every doctrine, that is to be assented to as an article of faith, is revealed in express words in scripture, since many truths are to be deduced from it by just and necessary consequences, which thereby become a rule of faith.

Nor are we to suppose that every part of scripture fully and clearly discovers all those things which are contained in the whole of it, since there was farther light given to the church, by degrees, in succeeding ages, as it grew up, from its infant state, to a state of perfect manhood; therefore there is a clearer and fuller revelation of the glorious mysteries of the gospel, under the new testament dispensation, than there was before it.

The Apostle uses the same metaphorical way of speaking, when he compares the state of the church, under the ceremonial law, to that of *an heir under age*, or of *children* under the direction of *tutors and governors*, whose instruction and advances in knowledge are proportioned to their age; so God revealed his word at *sundry times*, as well as in *divers manners*^f.

The word of God, accompanied with those additional helps before mentioned for the churches understanding the sense thereof, was always, indeed, sufficient to lead men into the knowledge of divine truth; but the canon being compleated, it is so now in an eminent degree; and it is agreeable to the divine perfections that such a rule should be given; for since salvation could not be attained, nor God glorified, without a discovery of those means, which are conducive thereto, it is not consistent with his wisdom and goodness that we should be left at the utmost uncertainty as to this matter, and at the same time rendered incapable of the highest privileges which attend instituted worship. Can we suppose that, when all other things necessary to salvation are adjusted, and many insuperable difficulties surmounted, and an invitation given to come and partake of it, that God should lay such a bar in our way, that it should be impossible for us to attain it, as being without a sufficient rule?

And since none but God can give us such a one, it is inconsistent with his sovereignty to leave it to men, to prescribe what is acceptable in his sight. They may, indeed, give laws, and thereby oblige their subjects to obedience; but these must be such as are within their own sphere; their power does not extend it self to religious matters, so that our faith and duty to God should depend upon their will; for this would be a bold presumption, and extending their authority and influence beyond due bounds; therefore since a rule of faith is necessary, we must conclude that God has given us such a one; and it must certainly be worthy of himself, and therefore perfect, and every way sufficient to answer the end thereof.

That it is so, farther appears from the event, or from the happy consequences of our obedience to it; from that peace, joy and holiness, which believers are made partakers of, while stedfastly adhering to this rule; thus 'tis said, that *through comfort of the scriptures they have hope*^g; and that hereby *the man of God is made wise to sal-*

^c John xxi. 25.

^d Deut. xxix. 29.

^e John xxi. 21, 22.

^f Gal. iv. 1, 3. Heb. i. 1.

^g Rom. xv. 4.

vation,

24 SCRIPTURE a Rule of Faith and Obedience.

vation, and perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works^a. The perfection of the law is demonstrated, by the Psalmist, by its effects, in that it *converts the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes^a*.

We might farther argue, that the scripture is a perfect rule of faith, from those threatnings which are denounced against them, who pretend to add to, or take from it; this was strictly forbidden, even when there was but a part of scripture committed to writing. Thus says God; *Ye shall not add to the word which I command you; neither shall you diminish ought from it^b*. And the Apostle denounces an anathema against any one who should pretend to *preach any other gospel*, than that which he had received from God^c. And, in the close of scripture, our Saviour testifies; to every man, that *if any should add to these things, God would add to him the plagues written in this book. And if any should take away from this book, God would take away his part out of the book of life^d*.

Thus having considered the scripture as a rule of faith, we proceed to shew what are the properties which belong to it as such.

1. A rule, when it is designed for general use, must have the sanction of publick authority: thus human laws, by which a nation is to be governed, which are a rule to determine the goodness or badness of mens actions, and their desert of rewards or punishments accordingly, must be established by publick authority. Even so the scripture is a rule of faith, as it contains the divine laws, by which the actions of men are to be tried, together with the ground which some have to expect future blessedness, and others to fear punishments threatned to those who walk not according to this rule.

2. A rule by which we are to judge of the nature, truth, excellency, perfection or imperfection of any thing, must be infallible, or else it is of no use; and, as such, nothing must be added to, or taken from it, for then it would cease to be a perfect rule: thus it must be a certain and impartial standard, by which things are to be tried: such a rule as this is scripture, as was but now observed. And it is an impartial rule; to which, as a standard, all truth and goodness is to be reduced and measured by it; *To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak*

not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them^e.

3. All appeals are to be made to a rule, and controversies to be tried and determined by it. Thus the scripture, as it is a rule of faith, is a judge of controversies; so that whatever different sentiments men have about religion, all must be reduced to, and the warrantableness thereof tried hereby, and a stop put to growing errors by an appeal to this rule, rather than to coercive power, or the carnal weapons of violence and persecution.

Moreover, the judgment we pass on our selves, as being sincere or hypocrites, accepted or rejected of God, is to be formed by comparing our conduct with scripture, as the rule by which we are to try the goodness or badness of our state, and of our actions.

4. A rule must have nothing of a different nature set up in competition with, or opposition to it; for that would be to render it useless, and unfit to be the standard of truth: thus scripture is the only rule of faith, and therefore no human traditions are to be set up as standards of faith in competition with it, for that would be to suppose it not to be a perfect rule. This the papists do, and therefore may be charged, as the pharisees were of old by our Saviour, with *transgressing, and making the commandment of none effect by their tradition^f*; concerning whom he also says, that *in vain they worship him, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men^g*. What is this but to reflect on the wisdom, and affront the authority and sovereignty of God, by casting this contempt on that rule of faith which he hath given?

Having considered scripture as a rule of faith and obedience, it is farther observed, that it is the only rule thereof, in opposition to the popish doctrine of human traditions, as pretended to be of equal authority with it; by which means the law of God is made void at this day, as it was by the Jews in our Saviour's time, and the scripture supposed to be an imperfect rule; the defect whereof they take this method to supply; and to give countenance thereto.

1. They refer to those scriptures, in which, it is said, our Saviour *did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written^h*; and his own words, wherein he tells them, that he *had many things to say unto them, which*

^a 1 Tim. iii. 15, 17.

^b Psal. xix. 7, 8.

^c Deut. iv. 2.

^d Gal. i. 8, 9.

^e Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

^f 1 Sai. viii. 20.

^g Matth. xv. 3, 6.

^h Verse 9.

ⁱ John xi. 30.

they could not then bearⁱ; as also to the words of the Apostle Paul^k; in which he puts the church in mind of a saying of our Saviour, received by tradition, because not contained in any of the Evangelists, viz. *it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

To which it may be replied,

Answ. (1.) That though 'tis true there were many things done, and words spoken by our Saviour, which are not recorded in scripture, and therefore we must be content not to know them, being satisfied with this, that nothing is omitted therein which is necessary to salvation, yet to pretend to recover, or transmit them to us by tradition, is to assert, and not to prove, what they impose on us as matters of faith.

(2.) Those things which our Saviour had to say, which he did not then impart to his disciples, because they were not able to bear them, respected, as is more than probable, what he designed to discover to them after his resurrection, during his forty days abode here on earth, or by his spirit, after his ascension into heaven, concerning the change of the sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, the abolition of the ceremonial law, the spirituality of his kingdom, which they were at that time less able to bear than they were afterwards, and other things relating to the success of their ministry, the gathering and governing of those churches, which should be planted by them; these seem to be intended by that expression, and not those doctrines which the papists transmit by oral tradition; such as the use of oil and spittle, together with water in baptism, and the sign of the cross therein; the baptism of bells, the lighting up of candles in churches at noon day, nor that of purgatory, or praying for the dead, or giving divine adoration to images or reliques, which are altogether unscriptural, and such as he would not have, at any time, communicated unto them.

(3.) Those words of our Saviour, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, though they are not contained in one distinct proposition, or in express words in the gospels, yet he therein exhorts his people to give to him that asketh; and speaks of the blessing that attends this duty, *that they might be*, that is, approve themselves to be the children of their Father^l, and exhorts them to hospitality to the poor,

and adds a blessing to it^m. Or, suppose the Apostle refers to a saying frequently used by our Saviour, which might then be remembered by some who had conversed with him; this is no sufficient warrant for any one to advance doctrines, contrary to those our Saviour delivered, under a pretence of having received them by unwritten tradition.

2. This doctrine is further defended from the words of the Apostle, in 1 Tim. vi. 20. where he advises Timothy to keep *that which was committed to his trust*, viz. those traditions which he was to remember and communicate to others: and also the advice which he gives to the church, *To hold the traditions which they had been taught, either by word or by his epistleⁿ*; the former respects, say they, unwritten traditions, the latter his inspired writings.

Answ. That which was committed to Timothy to keep, was either *the form of sound words*, or the gospel, which he was to hold fast^o; or the ministry which he had received of the Lord, or those gifts and graces which were communicated to him, to fit him for publick service. And as for those traditions which he speaks of in the other scripture, the meaning is only this; that they should remember not only the doctrines they had received from him, which were contained in his inspired epistles, but those which were agreeable to scripture, that he had imparted in the exercise of his publick ministry; the former were to be depended upon as an infallible rule of faith, the latter to be retained and improved as agreeable thereunto, and no further.

3. They further add, that it was by this means that God instructed his church for above two thousand years before the scripture was committed to writing.

Answ. To this it may be replied, that God communicated his mind and will to them, during that interval, in an extraordinary manner, as has been before observed, page 20. which cannot be said of any of those traditions which are pleaded for by them.

4. It is further argued, that *the book of the law* was formerly lost in Josiah's time; for it is said, that when it was found, and a part of it read to him, *he rent his clothes*, and was astonished, as though he had never read it before^p; yet he being a good man, was well instructed

ⁱ John xvi. 12. ^k Acts xx. 35. ^l Matt. v. 42. compared with 45. ^m Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14. ⁿ 2 Thess. ii. 15. ^o 2 Tim. i. 13. ^p 2 Kings xxiii. 8 to 11.

26 Unwritten TRADITIONS no Rule of Faith.

in the doctrines of religion; therefore this must have been by tradition.

Ans. To this it may be answered, that the book, which was then found, was, doubtless, an original manuscript of scripture, either of all the *books of Moses* or *Deuteronomy* in particular, but it is not to be supposed that he had never read it before; for a person may be affected at one time in reading that portion of scripture, which he has often read without its having the like effect upon him; and, doubtless, there were many copies of scripture transcribed, by which he was made acquainted with the doctrines of religion, without learning them from uncertain traditions.

5. They further alledge, that some books of scripture are lost, and therefore it is necessary that they should be supplied this way: the instances they give of this are some books referred to in scripture, *viz. the book of the wars of the Lord*, Numb. xxi. 14. and another going under the name of *Jasher*, 2 Sam. i. 18. compared with *Josh.* x. 13. and another called *the book of the acts of Solomon*, 1 Kings xi. 41. and also his *songs and proverbs*, and the account he gives of *trees, plants, beasts, fowls, creeping things, and fishes*, 1 Kings iv. 32, 33. There are also other books said to be written by *Samuel, Nathan and Gad*, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. the prophecy of *Ahijah the Shilonite*, and *the visions of Iddo the Seer*, 2 Chron. ix. 29. and *Jeremiah's lamentation for Josiah*, is said to be written in *the book of the Lamentations*, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. whereas there is no mention of *Josiah* in the book of scripture, which goes under that name; therefore they suppose that there was some other book so called, which was written by that prophet, but is now lost.

Ans. 1. As to the argument in general, that some books of scripture are lost, suppose we should take it for granted that they are so, must this loss be supplied by traditions, pretended to be divine, though without sufficient proof: however, I am not willing to make this concession, though, indeed, some protestant divines have done it, as thinking it equally supposable, that some books, wrote by divine inspiration, might be lost, as well as many words spoke by the same inspiration: but even these constantly maintain, that whatever inspired writings may have been lost, yet there is no doctrine necessary to the edification of the church, in what immediately relates to salvation, but what is contained in those writings,

which are preserved, by the care and goodness of providence, to this day: but, without giving into this concession, I would rather adhere to the more commonly received opinion, that no book, designed to be a part of the canon of scripture, is lost, tho' many uninspired writings have perished; and therefore as to those books but now mentioned, they either refer to some books of scripture, in which we have no mention of the inspired writers thereof, which, as is more than probable, were wrote by some noted prophet that flourished in the church at that time, which their respective histories refer to; therefore some suppose that the books of *Nathan and Gad*, or *Iddo*, refer to those of *Kings* or *Chronicles*, which are not lost. But since this is only a probable conjecture, we pass it over, and add, that it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the books said to be written by them, as also those of *Solomon*, that are not contained in scripture, were not written by divine inspiration, which is not only a safe but sufficient answer to the objection. As for *Jeremiah's Lamentation for Josiah*, it is probable that the book of scripture, which goes under that name, was written on the occasion of *Josiah's* death, in which, though he doth not mention the name of that good king, yet he laments the desolating judgments which were to follow soon after it.

Moreover, the papists pretend, that some part of the new testament is lost; particularly the *Epistle from Laodicea*, mentioned in *Coloss.* iv. 16. and one written to the *Corinthians*, *not to company with fornicators*, 1 Cor. v. 9. and another mentioned, 2 Cor. vii. 8. *by which he made them sorry*.

Ans. 1. As to the epistle from *Laodicea*, that was probably one of his inspired epistles, written by him when at *Laodicea*, and not directed, as is pretended, to the *Laodiceans*.

2. As to that epistle, which he is supposed to have written to the *Corinthians*, it is not expressly said that it was another epistle he had wrote to them; but it is plainly intimated, *ver.* 12. that he refers to the epistle, which he was then writing to them; a part of which related to that subject, as this chapter, in particular, does.

3. As to the *letter*, which he wrote to them, *which made them sorry*, it is not necessary to suppose that it was written by divine inspiration; for as every thing he delivered by word of mouth, was not

by the extraordinary *afflatus* of the Holy Ghost, why may we not suppose that there were several epistles written by him to the churches, some to comfort, others to admonish, reprove, or make them sorry, besides those that he was inspired to write.

Having considered the arguments brought to prove that some books of scripture are lost, we shall now prove, on the other hand, that we have the canon thereof compleat and entire. Some think this is sufficiently evident from what our Saviour says, *Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot, or tittle, shall not pass from the law*^a; and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail^b. If God will take care of every jot and tittle of scripture, will he not take care that no whole book, designed to be a part of the rule of faith, should be entirely lost? It is objected, indeed, to this, that our Saviour hereby intends principally the doctrines or precepts contained in the law; but if the subject matter thereof shall not be lost, surely the scripture that contains it shall be preserved entire.

But this will more evidently appear, if we consider that the books of the old testament were compleat in our Saviour's time; for it is said, *That beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself*^c; and this may also be proved from what the Apostle says, *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*^d: now it is impossible that they should be written for our learning if they are lost.

Add to this, the goodness of God, and the care of his providence, with respect to his church, further evinces this truth; for if he gave them ground to conclude, that *he would be with them always, even to the end of the world*^e, surely this argues, that he would preserve the rule he had given them to walk by, from all the injuries of time, so that it should not be lost to the end of the world.

Again, the *Jews* were the keepers of the oracles of God^f; now they are not reprov'd by our Saviour, or the Apostle Paul, for any unfaithfulness in not preserving them entire; and certainly our Saviour, when he reproves them for making void the law by their traditions, and threatens those that should add to or

take from it, if he had found them faulty, in not having faithfully preserved all the scriptures committed to them, he would have severely reprov'd them for this great breach of trust.

Object. It is objected against the scriptures being a perfect rule of faith, that they are in several places corrupted, *viz.* that the old testament was so by the *Jews*, out of malice against our Saviour, and the Christian religion, that they might conceal, or pervert to another sense, some prophecies relating to the Messiah, and the gospel-state. And as for the new testament, they pretend that it was corrupted by some hereticks; in defence of their perverse doctrines.

Ans. i. As to the old testament, it is very improbable and unreasonable to suppose that it was corrupted by the *Jews*. For,

(1.) Before our Saviour's time, no valuable end could be answered thereby; for then they expected the Messiah to come, according to what was foretold by the prophets, and understood their predictions in a true sense.

(2.) After he was come, and Christianity took place in the world, though malice might have prompted them to it, yet they would not do it, because they had always been trained up in this notion, that it was the vilest crime to add to, take from, or alter it: so that one of their own writers^g says concerning them, that they would rather die an hundred deaths, than suffer the law to be changed in any instance; yea, they have such a veneration for the law, that if, by any accident, part of it should fall to the ground, they would proclaim a fast, as fearing lest, for this, God would destroy the whole world, and reduce it to its first Chaos: and can any one think, that, under any pretence whatever, they would designedly corrupt the old testament? Yea, they were so far from doing it, that they took the greatest care, even to superstition, to prevent its being corrupted, through inadvertency, and accordingly number'd not only the books and sections, but even the words and letters, that not a single letter might be added to, or taken from it.

(3.) If they had any inclination to do this, out of malice against Christianity, it would have been to no purpose, after our Saviour's time; for it was

then

^a Matt. v. 18. ^b Luke xvi. 17. ^c Luke xxiv. 27.

^d Rom. xv. 4.

^e Matt. xxviii. 20.

^f Rom. iii. 2.

^g Vid. Philo. Jud. de Vit. Mosi; & eund. citat. ab Euseb. in Præp. Evang. l. viii. c. 6. & Joseph. contr. App. l. ii.

then translated into *Greek*, and this translation was in the hands of almost all Christians; so that the fallacy would soon have been detected. And if they had corrupted some copies of the *Hebrew* bible, they could not have corrupted or altered them all; therefore to attempt any thing of this kind, would have been to expose themselves to no purpose.

(4.) It would not have been for their own advantage to pervert it; for, in altering the texts that make for Christianity, they would (especially if the fraud should have been detected) have weakened their own cause so far, that the reputation of scripture being hereby lost, they could not have made use of it to that advantage, to prove their own religion from it.

But, notwithstanding all this out-cry of the scriptures being perverted, they pretend to give no proof hereof, except in two or three words, which do not much affect the cause of Christianity; whereas, if the *Jews* had design'd to pervert it, why did they not alter the *fifty third of Isaiah*, and many other scriptures, which so plainly speak of the person and offices of the Messiah.

2. As to the other part of the objection, that the new testament hath been corrupted by hereticks since our Saviour's time, whatever charge hath been brought against the *Arians*, and some others, of leaving out some words, or verses, which tend to overthrow their scheme, they have not been able, even when the empire was most favourable to their cause, to alter all the copies; so that their fallacy has been detected, and the corruption amended.

As for those various readings that there are of the same text, these consist principally in literal alterations, which do not much tend to pervert the sense thereof, it was next to impossible for so many copies of scripture to be transcribed without some mistakes, since they who were employ'd in this work were not under the infallible direction of the Spirit of God, as the first pen-men were; yet the providence of God hath not suffered them to make notorious mistakes; and whatever mistakes there may be in one copy, they may be corrected by another; so that the scripture is not, for this reason, chargeable with the reproach cast upon it, as though it were not a perfect rule of faith.

QUEST. IV. *How doth it appear that the scriptures are the word of God?*

ANSW. The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers to salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.

BEFORE we proceed to consider the arguments here brought to prove the scriptures to be the word of God, some things may be premised.

1. When we speak of the scriptures as divine, we don't only mean that they treat of God and divine things; to wit, his nature and works, as referring principally to the subject matter thereof; for this may be said of many human uninspired writings, which, in proportion to the wisdom of their authors, tend to set forth the divine perfections. And when, as the consequence hereof, we assert that every thing contained therein is infallibly true, we don't deny but that there are many things, which we receive from human testimony, which it would be scepticism to entertain the least doubt of the truth thereof; notwithstanding, when we receive a truth from human testimony, we judge of the certainty thereof, by the credibility of the evidence, and, in proportion thereunto, there is a degree of certainty arising from it: but when we suppose a truth to be divine, we have the highest degree of certainty equally applicable to every thing that is so, and that for this reason, because it is the word of him that cannot lie. Thus we consider the holy scriptures, as being of a divine original, or given by the inspiration of God, or, as his revealed will, designed to bind the consciences of men; and that

the penmen were not the inventors of them, but only the instruments made use of to convey these divine oracles to us, as the Apostle says ^a, *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake, as they were moved, by the Holy Ghost*: And the Apostle Paul says ^a, *I certify unto you, that the gospel, which was preached of me, is not after man; neither received I it of man; neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*; the former asserts this concerning scripture in general, and the latter concerning that part thereof which was transmitted to us by him: this is what we mean when we say the scripture is the word of God.

2. It is necessary for us to know and believe the scriptures to be the word of God, because they are to be received by us as a rule of faith and obedience, in whatever respects divine things, otherwise we are destitute of a rule, and consequently our religion would be a matter of the greatest uncertainty; and as this faith and obedience is divine, it is a branch of religious worship, and, as such, contains an entire subjection to God, a firm and unshaken assent to whatever he reveals as true; and a readiness to obey whatever he commands, as being influenced by his authority, which is inconsistent with any hesitation or doubt concerning this matter. Moreover, it is only therein that we have an account of the way in which sinners may have access to God; the terms of their finding acceptance in his sight, and all the promises of eternal blessedness, on which their hope is founded, are contained therein; if therefore we are not certain that the scriptures are the word of God, our faith and hope are vain; it is herein that *life and immortality is brought to light*, and, by *searching them, we think that we have eternal life*.

3. As divine revelation is necessary, so it is not impossible, contrary to reason or the divine perfections, for God to impart his mind and will to men in such a way as we call inspiration: these things must be made appear, otherwise it is a vain thing to attempt to give arguments to prove the scriptures to be the word of God; and, in order hereto, let it be considered,

(1.) That divine revelation is necessary; this appears because as religion is necessary, so there are some things contained in it which cannot be known by the light of nature, to wit, all those divine laws

and institutions, which are the result of God's arbitrary will; and these could not be known by the light of nature, or in a way of reasoning derived from it, therefore they must be known by special revelation. Positive laws, as opposed to those that are moral, depend upon a different foundation; the glory of God's sovereignty eminently appears in the one, as that of his holiness doth in the other: now his sovereign pleasure relating thereto could never have been known without divine revelation, and then all that revenue of glory, which is brought to him thereby, would have been entirely lost, and there would have been no instituted worship in the world; and the gospel, which is called the *unsearchable riches of Christ*^b, must have been for ever a hidden thing, and the condition of those who bear the Christian Name would have been no better than that of the heathen, concerning whose devotion, the Apostle Paul, though speaking of the wisest and best of them says ^c, that they *ignorantly worshipped an unknown God*; and elsewhere^d, that *the world by wisdom knew not God*; and the reason is, because they were destitute of divine revelation.

(2.) It is not impossible, contrary to reason or the divine perfections, that God should reveal his mind and will to man, which may be argued from hence; it contains no impossibility, for if it be possible for one creature to impart his mind and will to another, then certainly God can do this, for there is no excellency or perfection in the creature but what is eminently in him; and if it be not unworthy of the divine majesty to be omnipresent, and uphold all things by the word of his power, it is not unbecoming his perfections to manifest himself to intelligent creatures, who, as such, are fit to receive the discoveries of his mind and will; and his endowing them with faculties capable of receiving these manifestations, argues, that he designed that they should be favoured with them; and therefore whatever displays there may be of infinite condescension therein, yet it is not unbecoming his perfections so to do.

(3.) As God cannot be at a loss for an expedient how to discover his mind and will to man, and is not confined to one certain way, so he may, if he pleases, make it known by inspiration; it is not impossible, neither is there any thing in

^a 2 Pet. i. 21.

^a Gal. i. 11, 12.

^b Eph. iii. 8.

^c Acts xvii. 23.

^d 1 Cor. i. 24.

30 *The Scriptures proved to be the Word of God.*

the subject that should hinder him from impressing, whatever ideas he designs to impart, on the minds of men. This a finite spirit may do; and that there is such a thing as this, will hardly be denied by any, but those who, with the Sadducees, deny the nature and power of Spirits: it hence follows, that God can much more impress the souls of men, or immediately communicate his mind to them in such a way, as we call inspiration; and to deny that there is such a thing as inspiration, is not only to deny the credibility of scripture-history, as well as its divine authority, but it is to deny that which the heathen, by the light of nature, have universally believed to be consonant to reason, and therefore they often represent their gods as conversing with men; and they appear, in many of their writings, not to have the least doubt whether there has been such a thing as inspiration in the world.

These things being premised, we are now more particularly to consider those arguments which are brought to prove the scriptures to be the word of God, or that they were given by divine inspiration: these are taken either from the internal evidence we have hereof, *viz.* the subject matter of scripture, from the majesty of the stile, the purity of the doctrines, the harmony or consent of all its parts, and the scope or tendency of the whole to give all glory to God; or else external, taken from the testimony which God himself gave to it, at first by miracles, whereby the mission of the prophets, and consequently what they were sent to deliver, was confirmed, and afterwards, in succeeding ages, by the use which he hath made of it in convincing and converting sinners, and building up believers to salvation. These are the arguments mentioned in this answer, which will be distinctly considered, and some others added, as a further proof of this matter, to wit, those taken from the character of the inspired writers, particularly as they were holy men, and so they would not impose on the world, or pretend themselves to have been inspired, if they were not; and also, as they were plain and honest men, void of all craft and subtilty, and so could not impose on the world; and, had they attempted to do so, they had a great many subtle and malicious enemies, who would soon have detected the fallacy. To this we shall also add an argument taken from the sub-

limity of the doctrine, in which respect it is too great, and has too much wisdom in it for men to have invented; and others taken from the antiquity thereof, together with its wonderful preservation, notwithstanding all the endeavours of its enemies to root it out of the world; and then we shall consider how far the testimony of the church is to be regarded, not as though it contained the principal foundation of our faith, as the papists suppose; but yet this may be, if duly considered, an additional evidence to those that have been before given; and then we shall speak something concerning the witness of the Spirit with the scripture in the heart of man, which inclines him to be persuaded by, and rest in the other arguments brought to support this truth; and if all these be taken together, they will, we hope, beget a full conviction in the minds of men, that the scriptures are the word of God; which leads us to consider the arguments in particular.

I. From the majesty of the stile in which it is written. This argument does not equally hold good with respect to all the parts of scripture; for there is, in many places thereof, a great plainness of speech and familiarity of expression adapted to the meanest capacity, and sometimes a bare relation of things, without that majesty of expression, which we find in other places: thus in the historical books we don't observe such a loftiness of stile, as there is in *Job, Psalms, Isaiah*, and some other of the prophets; so that there are arguments of another nature to prove them to be of divine authority. However, we may observe such expressions interspersed throughout almost the whole scripture, which set forth the sovereignty and greatness of God; as when he is represented speaking immediately himself in a majestic way, tending not only to bespeak attention, but to strike those that hear or read with a reverential fear of his divine perfections; thus, when he gives a summons to the whole creation to give ear to his words, *Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken*^e; or, swears by himself, that *unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*^f; or when it is said, *Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my foot-stool*^g; and elsewhere, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness*

^e *Isai. i. 2.*

^f *Chap. xly. 23.*

^g *Chap. lxvi. 1.*

The Scriptures proved to be the Word of God. 31

are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him; his lightnings enlightened the world. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth^h.

And when he is represented as casting contempt on all the great men of this world, thus he is said to cut off the spirit of princes, and to be terrible to the kings of the earthⁱ; and to charge even his angels with folly^k; or when the prophet speaks of him, as one who had measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a ballance; and that the nations of the earth are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the ballance; yea, as nothing, less than nothing and vanity, when compared with him^l. It would be almost endless to refer to the many places of scripture, in which God speaks in such a stile, as is inimitable by any creature: of this we have several instances in the book of *Job*, especially in those chapters where he is represented as answering *Job* out of the whirlwind, and speaking with such a loftiness of stile, as, it may be, the like cannot be found in any human composition^m, where such expressions are used, which argue the stile to be divine, great and magnificent; so that if it was not immediately from God, it would be the most bold presumption for any creature to speak in such a way: therefore this argument, taken from the majestick stile of scripture, is not without its proper weight; however, it may serve to prepare us to receive those other arguments, which, together with this, evince its divine original.

II. From the purity and holiness of its doctrines, and that either, if we consider it absolutely, or compare it with all other writings, whereby it will appear not only to have the preference to them, but to be truly divine, and so is deservedly stiled the *holy scripture*ⁿ; and the words thereof pure as silver tried in a furnace, purified seven times^o; and to speak of right things, in which there is nothing forward or perverse^p. Thus every one that duly weighs the subject matter thereof, may behold therein the displays of the glory of the holiness of God: here let us

consider, that the word of God appears to be divine from its purity and holiness.

1. As considered absolutely, or in itself. For,

(1.) It lays open the vile and detestable nature of sin, to render it abhorred by us. Thus the Apostle says^q, *I had not known sin*; that is, I had not so fully understood the abominable nature thereof as I do, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, *thou shalt not covet*; and hereupon he concludes, that *the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good*.

(2.) It presents to our view the various instances of the divine vengeance, and shews us how the wrath of God is revealed against the unrighteousness of sinners, to make them afraid of rebelling against him. Thus it gives us an account how the angels hereby fell from and lost their first habitation, and are thrust down to hell, being reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day^r. And also how man hereby lost his primitive integrity and glory, and exposed himself to the wrath and curse of God due to sin, and all the miseries of this life consequent thereon, and how it has destroyed flourishing nations, and render'd them desolate. Thus it gives us an account how the Jews were first carried into *Babylon* for their idolatry, and other abominations, and afterwards cast of and made the sad monument of the divine wrath, as at this day, for crucifying Christ, persecuting his followers, and opposing the gospel. It also gives an account of the distress and terror of conscience, which wilful and presumptuous sins have exposed particular persons to; such as *Cain*, *Judas*, and others; this is described in a very pathetick manner, when it is said of the wicked man, who has his portion of the good things of this life, that when he comes to die, *Terrors take hold of him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east-wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand*^s.

Moreover, the purity of the scripture further appears, in that it warns sinners of that eternal ruin, which they expose themselves to in the other world; *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and*

^h Psal. xcvi. 1-5.

ⁱ Psal. lxxvi. 12.

^k Job iv. 18.

^l Isa. xl. 12, 15, 17.

^m Job, chap. xxxviii.

to xlii. ⁿ Rom. i. 2.

^o Psal. xlii. 6.

^p Prov. viii. 6, 7, 8.

^q Rom. vii. 7.

^r Jude 6.

^s Job xxvii. 20, 21, 22.

from

32 *The Scriptures proved to be the Word of God.*

from the glory of his power^t. All these things discover the purity and holiness of the word of God.

(3.) It never gives the least indulgence or dispensation to sin, nor in any of its doctrines, as being most pure and holy, leads us to licentiousness; and it not only reproves sin in the life and outward conversation of men, but also discovers its secret recesses in the heart, where its chief seat is; obviates and guards against its first motions, tending thereby to regulate the secret thoughts of men, and the principle of all their actions, which it requires to be pure and holy. In this the scripture excels all other writings with respect to its holiness.

(4.) All the blessings and benefits which it holds forth, or puts us in mind of, as the peculiar instances of divine favour and love to man, are urged and insisted on as motives to holiness; thus it is said, *The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance*^u; and when Moses had been putting the *Israelites* in mind of God's increasing them, *as the stars of heaven for multitude*^x, he adds, *therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge and statutes, his judgments and commandments alway*. And when the loving kindness of God has been abused by men, it severely reproves them for their vile ingratitude; as when it is said^v, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, oh foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that bought thee? Hath not he made thee, and established thee?*

(5.) All the examples proposed to our imitation therein, are such as favour of, and lead to, holiness; and when it recommends the actions or conversation of men, it is more especially for that holiness which is discovered therein: And, on the other hand, when it gives us the character of wicked men, together with the dreadful consequence thereof, it is, that we may avoid and be deterred from committing the same sins that will be their ruin in the end.

(6.) The rules laid down relating to civil affairs in the old testament dispensation, and the behaviour of one man towards another, have a vein of holiness running through them all. Thus the government of the *Jewish* state, as described in the books of *Moses*, and elsewhere, discovers it to be an holy commonwealth; and they are often called an holy nation, as governed by those laws which God gave them; so the government of

the church in the gospel dispensation, is a holy government: visible holiness is a term of church-communion, and apostacy and revolt from God excludes from it.

(7.) All the promises contained in scripture are or will be certainly fulfilled, and the blessings it gives us ground to expect, conferr'd; and therefore it is a faithful word, and consequently pure and holy.

2. If we compare the scripture with other writings, which are of a human composition, it plainly excels in holiness. For,

(1.) If we compare it with the writings of heathen moralists, such as *Seneca*, *Plato*, and others, though they contain a great many good directions for the ordering the conversations of men, agreeably to the dictates of nature and right reason, yet most of them allow of, or plead for some sins, which the scripture mentions with abhorrence, such as revenging injuries, self-murder; and several other instances of moral impurity, were not only practised by those who laid down the best rules to enforce moral virtue, but either countenanced, or, at least, not sufficiently fenced against, by what is contained in their writings; and even their strongest motives to virtue, or the government of the passions, or a generous contempt of the world, are taken principally from the tendency which such a course of life will have to free us from those things that tend to debase and afflict the mind, and fill it with uneasiness, when we consider ourselves as acting contrary to the dictates of nature, which we have as intelligent creatures; whereas, on the other hand, the scripture leads us to the practice of Christian virtues from better motives, and considers us not barely as men, but Christians, under the highest obligations to the blessed Jesus, and constrain'd hereunto by his condescending love, express'd in all that he has done and suffer'd for our redemption and salvation; and it puts us upon desiring and hoping for communion with God, thro' him, in the performance of those evangelical duties, which the light of nature knows nothing of, and so discovers a solid foundation for our hope of forgiveness of sin, through his blood, together with peace of conscience and joy resulting from it; it also directs us to look for that life and immortality, which is brought to light through the gospel; in which respects, it far exceeds the writings of the best heathen moralists, and so contains in it the visible

^t 2 Thess. i. 9.

^u Rom. ii. 4.

^x Deut. x. 22. compared with Chap. xi. 1.

^v Deut. xxxii. 6.

marks and characters of its divine original.

(2.) If we compare the scriptures with other writings among Christians, which pretend not to inspiration, we shall find in these writings a great number of impure and false doctrines, derogatory to the glory of God, in many of the pretended expositions of scripture. If therefore men, who have the scripture in their hands, propagate unholy doctrines, they would do so much more were there no scripture to guide them: thus the popish doctrine of free-will to what is spiritually good; the merit of good works, human satisfactions, penances, indulgences and dispensations for sin, are all impure doctrines, which are directly contrary to scripture; and, as contraries, illustrate each other, so hereby the holiness and purity of scripture, which maintains the contrary doctrines, will appear to those who impartially study it, and understand the sense thereof.

(3.) If we compare the scriptures with the imposture of *Mahomet*, in the book called the *Alcoran*, which the *Turks* make use of as a rule of faith, and prefer it to scripture, and reckon it truly divine, that contains a system not only of fabulous, but corrupt and impure notions, accommodated to mens sensual inclinations. Thus it allows of polygamy, and many impurities in this world, and promises to its votaries, a sensual paradise in the next, all which is contrary to scripture; so that composures merely human, whether they pretend to divine inspiration or not, discover themselves not to be the word of God, by their unholiness, as the scripture manifests it self to be divine, by the purity of its doctrine; and, indeed, it can't be otherwise, considering the corruption of man's nature, as well as the darkness and blindness of his mind, which, if it pretends to frame a rule of faith, it will be like himself, impure and unholy; but that which has such marks of holiness, as the scripture has, appears to be inspired by a holy God.

Having considered the holiness of scripture doctrines, we proceed to shew the weight of this argument, or how far it may be insisted on to prove its divine authority. It is to be confess'd, that a book's, containing holy things or rules for a holy life, don't of it self prove its divine original; for then other books might be called the word of God besides the scrip-

ture, which is so called, not only as containing some rules that promote holiness, but as being the fountain of all true religion; and its being adapted above any book of human composure, to answer this end, affords an argument of some weight to prove it to be of God. For,

1. Man, who is prone to sin, naturally blinded and prejudic'd against divine truth and holiness, could never compose a book that is so consonant to the divine perfections, and contains such a display of God's glory, and is so adapted to make us holy.

2. If we suppose that man could invent a collection of doctrines, that tended to promote holiness, could he invent doctrines so glorious, and so much adapted to this end, as these are? If he could, he that does this must either be a good or a bad man: if we suppose the former, he would never pretend the scripture to be of divine authority, when it was his own composure; and if the latter, it is contrary to his character, as such, to endeavour to promote holiness; for then satan's kingdom must be divided against it self: but of this, more in its proper place, when we come to consider the character of the penmen of scripture, to give a further proof of its divine authority.

3. 'Tis plain, that the world without scripture could not arrive to holiness; for the Apostle says ^a, *That the world by wisdom knew not God*; and certainly where there is no saving knowledge of God, there is no holiness; and the same Apostle ^a gives an account of the great abominations that were committed by the heathen; being destitute of scripture light, they were *filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c.*

If therefore the doctrines contained in the scriptures are not only pure and holy themselves, but tend to promote holiness in us, this is not without its proper weight to prove their divine original.

III. The scriptures further manifest themselves to be the word of God from the consent or harmony of all the parts thereof. This argument will appear more strong and conclusive, if we compare them with other writings, in which there is but little harmony. Thus, if we consult the writings of most men uninspired, we shall find that their sentiments

^a 1 Cor. i. 21.

^a Rom. i. 29, 30, 31.

34 *The Harmony of SCRIPTURE proves it divine.*

contained therein oftentimes very widely differ; and if, as historians, they pretend to report matters of fact, their evidence, or report, does not, in all respects, agree together, which shews that they are fallible; but the exact and harmonious agreement of scripture proves it divine. That other writings of human composition agree not among themselves, is very evident; and 'tis less to be wonder'd at if we consider,

(1.) That men are naturally blind and unacquainted with the things of God; and therefore their writings will hardly be consistent with themselves, much less with one another, as they are oftentimes inconsistent with the standard of truth, by which they are to be tried; nothing is more common than for men to betray their weakness, and cast a blemish on their compositions, by contradicting themselves, especially if they are long, and consist of various subjects.

(2.) Men are much more liable to contradict one another when any scheme of doctrine is pretended to be laid down by different persons; for when they attempt to represent matters of fact, they often do it in a very different light: this may be more especially observed in those accounts that are given of doctrines that are new, or not well known by the world, or in historical accounts, not only of general occurrences, but of particular circumstances attending them, where trusting to their memory and judgment, they often impose on themselves and others.

(3.) This disagreement of human writings will more evidently appear, when their authors were men of no great natural wisdom, especially if they lived in different ages, or places remote from one another, and so could have no opportunity to consult one another, or compare their writings together, we shall scarce ever find a perfect harmony or agreement in such writings; neither should we in scripture, were it not written by divine inspiration.

This will appear, if we consider that the penmen thereof were in themselves as liable to mistake as other men; and had they been left to themselves herein, they would have betray'd as much weakness, confusion, and self-contradiction, as any other writers have done; and it may be more, inasmuch as many of them had not the advantage of a liberal education, nor were conversant in human learning,

but were taken from mean employments, and made use of by God in this work, that so we may herein see more of the divinity of the writings they were employ'd to transmit to us: besides, they lived in different ages and places, and so could not consult together what to impart, and yet we find, as we shall endeavour to prove, that they all agree together: therefore the harmony of their writings is an evident proof that they were inspired by the same spirit, and consequently that they are the word of God.

We might here consider the historical parts of scripture, and the account which one inspired writer gives of matters of fact, as agreeing with what is related by another; and also the harmony of all the doctrines contained therein, as not only agreeing in the general scope and design thereof, but in the way and manner in which they are laid down or explained: but we shall more particularly consider the harmony of scripture, as what is foretold in one part thereof, is related as accomplished in another. And,

1. There are various predictions relating to the providential dealings of God with his people, which had their accomplishment in an age or two after. Thus the prophets *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, and others, foretold the captivity and the number of years they should be detained in *Babylon*, and their deliverance by *Cyrus*, who is expressly mentioned by name. These prophecies, and the accomplishment thereof are so obvious, that there is no one who reads the old testament but will see an harmony between them; so that what in one place is represented as foretold, in another place, is spoken of as accomplished in its proper time^b.

And the revolt and apostacy of *Israel*, their turning aside from God to idolatry, which was the occasion of their desolation, was foretold by *Moses*^c, and by *Joshua*^d; and every one that reads the *book of Judges*, will see that this was accomplished; for when *Moses* and *Joshua* were dead, and that generation who lived with them, they revolted to idolatry, and were punished for the same in various instances^e.

And the prophecy of the great reformation which *Josiah* should make, and in particular, that he should burn the bones of the idolatrous priests on the altar at *Bethel*^f, was exactly accomplished above three hundred years after^g.

^b *Isai*. xlv. 28. and *Chap*. xlv. 1—4. compared with *Ezra* i. 2, 3. 15, 16. and *Chap*. xxiv. 19.

^c *Judg*. ii. 8, 10, 11, 14.

^d *Deut*. xxxi. 29.

^e *1 Kings* xiii. 2.

^f *Josh*. xxiii.

^g *2 Kings* xxiii. 15, 16.

2. There are various predictions under the old testament relating to our Saviour, and the new testament church, many of which have had their accomplishment, and others are daily accomplishing. 'Tis said ^h, *To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins*; and we shall find, that what is foretold concerning him in the old testament, is related as accomplished in the new; particularly,

(1.) That he should come in the flesh, was foretold in the old testamentⁱ, and is mentioned as accomplished in the new^{*}.

(2.) That he should work miracles for the good of mankind, and to confirm his mission, was foretold^k and accomplished^l.

(3.) That he should live in this world in a low and humbled state, was foretold^m; and the whole account of his life in the gospels bears witness that those predictions were fully accomplished.

(4.) That he should be cut off, and die a violent death, was typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness, viz. that he should be lifted up upon the crossⁿ, and foretold in several other scriptures^o; and this is largely insisted on, as fulfilled in the new testament.

(5.) That after he had continued some time in a state of humiliation, he should be exalted, was foretold^p, and fulfilled^q.

(6.) That his glory should be proclaimed and published in the preaching of the gospel, was foretold^r, and fulfilled^s, as appears from many scriptures.

(7.) That he should be the spring and fountain of all blessedness to his people, was foretold^t, and fulfilled^u. In these, and many other instances, we may observe such a beautiful consent of all the parts of scripture, as proves it to be the very word of God.

But since it will not be sufficient, to support the divine authority of scripture, to assert that there is such a harmony, as we have observed, unless we can prove that it doth not contradict it self in any instances; therefore the next thing we are to consider, is the reproach cast upon it by those who would bring all divine revelation into contempt, as though it contradicted it self in several instances, and contained various absurdities, which,

were they able to make appear, would enervate the force of the argument we are maintaining, to prove the scripture to be the word of God from the consent of the parts thereof: therefore we shall consider some of those contradictions, which many, who pretend to criticise on the words of scripture, charge it with, as so many objections against the harmonious consent, and consequently the divine authority thereof, together with the answers, which may be given to each of them.

Object. 1. If we compare our Saviour's genealogy, as related in the first of *Matthew* and the third of *Luke*, they alledge that there is a very great inconsistency between them, for one mentions different persons, as his progenitors, from what the other does; as, for instance, in *Matth.* i. he is said to be the son of *Joseph*, and *Joseph* the son of *Jacob*, and he the son of *Matthan*; but the other Evangelist, viz. *Luke*, says, that he was the son of *Joseph*, which was the son of *Heli*, which was the son of *Matthat*; and so we find the names of each genealogy very differing, till we come to *David*; therefore they suppose both these genealogies can't be true, inasmuch as the one contradicts the other.

Answer. It evidently appears, that there is no contradiction between these two genealogies, since *Matthew* gives an account of *Joseph's* ancestors, and *Luke* of *Mary's*, and so, both together, prove that he was the son of *David*, by his reputed father's, as well as his mother's side.

And if it be replied, that *Luke*, as well as *Matthew*, gives an account of *Joseph's* genealogy, and therefore this answer is not sufficient: we may observe, that it is said^x, that *Jesus was, as 'tis supposed*, the son of *Joseph*, which was the son of *Heli*, &c. the meaning is, he was, indeed, the supposed son of *Joseph*; but he really descended from *Heli*, the father of the virgin *Mary*; and nothing is more common in scripture than for grandson's to be called sons; and if we observe the meaning of the *Greek* words, which we render, *which was the Son*, &c. it may better be render'd, who descended from *Heli*, and then there is not the least absurdity in it, supposing *Heli* to be his grandfather; and therefore there is no appear-

^h Acts x. 43. ⁱ Hagg. ii. 7. Mal. iii. 1. Isai. ix. 6. ^{*} John i. 14. Gal. iv. 4. ^k Isai. xxxv. 5, 6. ^l Matt. xi. 4, 5. ^m Isai. lii. 14. and Chap. liii. 3. ⁿ Numb. xxi. 9. compared with John iii. 14. ^o Isai. liii. 7. and Dan. ix. 26. ^p Isai. lii. 13. Chap. liii. 11, 12. Psal. lxxviii. 18. ^q Acts i. 9. Phil. ii. 9. ^r Isai. xi. 10. Psal. cx. 2. Isai. lx. 1, 2, 3. ^s 1 Tim. iii. 16. Mark xvi. 15. ^t Gen. xxii. 18. Psal. lxxii. 17. Isai. xlix. 8, 9. ^u 2 Cor. vi. 2. Acts iii. 26. ^x Luke iii. 23, 24.

36 Self-Contradiction unjustly charged on SCRIPTURE.

ance of contradiction between these two scriptures.

Object. 2. It is pretended, that there is a plain contradiction between these two places, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 24. and 1 *Chron.* xxi. 25. in the former whereof 'tis said, that *David* bought the threshing-floor of *Araunab* the *Jebusite*, to build an altar on, and the oxen for burnt offerings, that the plague might be stay'd, for fifty shekels of silver; but in the other, viz. in *Chronicles*, 'tis said, that he gave him for the place six hundred shekels of gold; therefore they pretend that one of these places must be wrong, inasmuch as they plainly contradict one another.

Answ. The answer that may be given to this objection, is, that *David* paid *Araunab* (who is otherwise called *Ornan*) for his threshing-floor, where he built an altar; and for the oxen, which he bought for sacrifice, fifty shekels of silver, as it's express'd in *Samuel*. But, beside this threshing-floor, he bought the whole place, as it is said in *Chronicles*, i. e. the whole tract of ground, or mountain, on which it stood, whereon he designed that the temple should be builded; and therefore he saith concerning it, *This is the house of the Lord God*, i. e. this place, or tract of land, which I have bought round about the threshing-floor, is the place where the house of God shall stand; and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel, which was to be built in that particular place, where the threshing-floor was: now, tho' he gave for the threshing-floor but fifty shekels of silver, (which probably was as much as it was worth) yet the whole place, containing ground enough for the temple, with all its courts, and the places leading to it, was worth a great deal more; or, if there were any houses in the place, these were also purchased to be pull'd down, to make room for the building the temple; and, for all this, he gave six hundred shekels of gold, and we can hardly suppose it to be worth less; so that there is no real contradiction between these two places.

Object. 3. 'Tis pretended, that there is a contradiction between 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 13. and 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12. in the former of which *Gad* came to *David*, being sent to reprove him for his numbering the people, and said, *Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?* But, in *Chronicles*, he speaks of but three years of famine.

Answ. To reconcile this seeming contradiction,

1. Some think that, in some ancient copies, it is not seven, but three, years of famine, in *Samuel*, as it is in *Chronicles*; the reason of this conjecture is, because the LXX, or *Greek* translation, have it so; and they think that these translators would hardly have made so bold with scripture, as to put three for seven, if they had not found it so in the copies that they made use of, when they compiled this translation: but probably this answer will not give satisfaction to the objectors; therefore,

2. The best way to account for this seeming contradiction, is this: In *Chronicles*, *Gad* bids him chuse if he would have three years of famine, viz. from that time; but in *Samuel* he saith, shall seven years of famine come unto thee, that is, as though he should say there hath been three years of famine already, for *Saul* and his bloody house, because he slew the *Gibeonites*. Now, that famine ceased but the year before, and the ground being so chap'd and hard for want of rain this year, which was the fourth, it was little better than a year of famine. Now, saith *Gad*, wilt thou have this famine continued three years more (which, in all, makes up seven years) unto thee in the land? And, if we take it in this sense, there is no contradiction between these two scriptures, though one speaks of three years, and the other of seven.

Object. 4. They pretend to find an inconsistency, or absurdity, little better than a contradiction, by comparing 1 *Sam.* xvi. 21, 22. and chap. xvii. 55. in the former it is said, *David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer, and he sent to Jesse, with the intent that he might give him leave to stand before him, inasmuch as he had found favour in his sight.* Now, say they, how can this be consistent with the other scripture; where *Saul* seeing *David* going forth against *Goliath* the *Philistine*, asked *Abner*, *Whose son is this youth?* And *Abner* replied, *He could not tell*; and, in the next verse, he is order'd to enquire who he was. Now how could this be, when he had been his armour-bearer, stood before him, and found favour in his sight; and he had sent to *Jesse*, to desire that he might live with him.

Answ. I can see no appearance of absurdity, or defect of harmony, between these two scriptures; for supposing *Saul's* memory had fail'd him, and he had for-

¹ 1 *Chron.* xxii. 1.

² 2 *Sam.* xxi. 1.

got that *David* had stood before him as a servant, shall the scripture, that gives an account of this, be reflected on, as containing an inconsistency? 'Tis true, *David* had stood before *Saul*, as his armour-bearer; yet he had, for some time, been sent home and dismiss'd from his service, during which time he kept his father's sheep; and probably he lived not long in *Saul*'s family; therefore it is no wonder if *Saul* had now forgot him. There is no master of a family but may forget what servants have formerly lived with him, and much more a king, who hardly knows the names of the greatest part of the servants that are about him: besides, at this time, *David* appear'd in the habit of a shepherd, and therefore *Saul* might well say, whose son is the youth? This sufficiently accounts for the difficulty, and vindicates this scripture from the charge of inconsistency; though some account for it thus, by supposing that *Saul* knew *David*, (as having been his armour-bearer) but did not know his father, and therefore asks, *whose son is this?* or who is he that hath so bold and daring a son, as this youth appears to be? If these things be consider'd, there appears not the least absurdity in this scripture.

Object. 5. Another contradiction, which some charge the scripture with, is, that when *Israel*, pursuant to the advice of *Balaam*, committed idolatry, and went a whoring after the daughters of *Moab*, and God consumed them for it by the plague, 'tis said^a, *Those that died in the plague were twenty four thousand*; but the Apostle *Paul*, referring to the same thing, says^b, *Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand*.

Answer. 1. The answer that may be given to this objection, is, that the Apostle *Paul*, when he says, *three and twenty thousand died, or fell, in one day*, speaks of those who died by the immediate hand of God, by the pestilential distemper that was sent among them: but, beside these, there were many more that died by the hand of publick justice for this sin; for in that chapter in *Numbers*, verses 4 and 5. we read of the *heads of the people being hanged up before the Lord, and the judges being order'd to slay every man his men that were joined unto Baal-peor*. These died by the sword of justice, and it is no great impropriety to say, that such died in a mediate way, by the plague, or

sword of God; the sword is one of his plagues, as well as pestilential diseases, and is frequently so stiled in scripture: now we cannot suppose that fewer died of this latter plague, if that be the import of the word, than a thousand; so that *Moses* gives the number of all that died, whether by God's immediate hand, or by the sword of the magistrate, pursuant to his command: but if it be reckoned too great a strain upon the sense of the word Plague, to admit of this solution, let it be farther observed, that, in the 9th verse, where *Moses* gives the sum total of those that died, it is not said that they were such who died of the plague, but *in the plague*; that is, those that died in or soon after the time that the plague raged among them, whose death was occasioned by this sin, were *four and twenty thousand*; so these two places of scripture are so far from contradicting, that they rather illustrate one another.

Object. 6. Another contradiction is pretended to be between *Gal. i. 8.* where the Apostle says, *Though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*; and *2 Cor. xi. 4.* *If he that cometh, preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him*. In one place he speaks against those who preach another gospel; in the other he says, they may be born with, which seems to be a contradiction.

Answer. For the reconciling and accounting for the sense of these two scriptures, let us consider, that in the former of them the Apostle pronounces them that preached another gospel accursed, and therefore, doubtless, they were not to be born with, or allowed of; therefore it must be enquired what he means when he says, in the other scripture, that such may be well born with; now this scripture will, without the least strain or force upon the words, admit of one of these two senses.

1. It may be consider'd as containing a sarcasm, by which the Apostle reproves their being too much inclin'd to adhere to false teachers: if, says he, these bring you tidings of a better Jesus, a better spirit, a better gospel, then bear with them; but this they cannot do, therefore reject them; or,

2. The words may be render'd, instead of ye might well bear with him, ye

^a Numb. xxv. 9.

^b 1 Cor. x. 8.

38 Self-Contradiction unjustly charged on SCRIPTURE.

might well bear *with me*, as is observed in the marginal reference; the word *him* being in an *Italick* character, as will be elsewhere observed^c, is not in the original, and therefore *me* may as well be supplied as *him*, and so the meaning is this; ye bear with false preachers, are very favourable to them, and seem a little cold to us the Apostles; so that I am afraid, as is observed in the foregoing verse, least your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; you can bear with these false teachers and will you not bear with me, as he says, *verse 1. Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly, and indeed bear with me.* 'Tis a sign religion is at a low ebb, when it is with some difficulty that professors are perswaded to bear with those that preach the pure gospel of Christ, who are too prone to turn aside to another gospel. Take the words in either of these senses, and they exactly harmonize with that text in *Galatians*, and not, as the objectors pretend, contradict it.

Object. 7. Another charge of contradiction, which is brought against scripture, is, that our Saviour saith^a, *Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword*; this is contrary to Christ's general character, as a *Prince of Peace*^c; and to the advice he gives his disciples, not to *use the sword*, because *such shall perish by it*^d; and what he saith elsewhere, *My kingdom is not of this world*^e; and therefore not to be propagated by might or power, by force or civil policy, or those other carnal methods, by which the kingdoms of this world are advanced and promoted.

Answ. For the reconciling this seeming contradiction, let it be considered, that Christ did not come to put a sword into his followers hands, or to put them upon making war with the powers among whom they dwell, for the propagating the Christian religion; his gospel was to be advanced by spiritual methods: in this sense, the design of his coming was not to send a sword, but to bring spiritual peace to his people; but when he saith, *I came to send a sword*, it implies that his coming, his kingdom and gospel, should occasion persecution and war, by reason of the corruption of men; this the gospel may do, and yet not put men upon disturbing their neighbours, or making war with them; and this is not contrary to Christ's general character of coming to

be the author of spiritual peace to his people.

Object. 8. Another contradiction is pretended to be between *1 Kings* viii. 9. and *Heb.* ix. 4. in the former 'tis said, *There was nothing in the ark but the two tables, which Moses put there*; in the latter, that *there was the golden pot, that had manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.*

Answ. This seeming contradiction may easily be reconciled: for we suppose it true that there was nothing in the ark but the two tables, as it is said in the former of these scriptures, therefore to explain the latter agreeably to it, two senses may be given of it.

1. 'Tis not necessary to suppose, that the Apostle means, in the ark was the *golden pot*, &c. but in the *holiest of all*, which he mentions in the foregoing verse; therefore the meaning is as in the *holiest of all*, there was the *golden censer*, and *the ark of the covenant*, so in it was the *golden pot* and *Aaron's rod*: but because there may be an objection against this sense, from its being said in the words immediately following, that over it were the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat, where it refers to the ark, and not to the tabernacle, or holiest of all: if therefore the Cherubims were over the ark, then the other things must be supposed to be in it, which objection, indeed, is not without its force, unless we suppose that the words^h may be render'd *in the higher parts of it*, to wit, of *the holiest of all*, *were the Cherubims of glory above the mercy seat*, and accordingly the meaning is this; that within this second vail was not only the ark, the golden pot of manna, *Aaron's rod*, &c. but also the Cherubims of glory, which were above them all; but since the grammatical construction seems rather to favour the objection, there is another sense given of the words, which sufficiently reconciles the seeming contradiction, *viz.*

2. When it is saidⁱ, that *therein*, or *in it*, to wit, the ark, was the golden pot that had manna and *Aaron's rod* that budded, the meaning is, they were near it, or beside it, or some way or other fasten'd, or adjoining to it, in some inclosure, in the outside of the ark, whereas nothing was in it but the two tables; so that there is no real contradiction between these two scriptures.

Many more instances of the like nature might have been given, but, instead

^c See Vol. II. Que. 154.
^h ἡ ἑνὶ τῷ αὐτῷ.

^d Matth. x. 34.
ⁱ [ἐν ᾧ] ἐν oftentimes signifies,

^e Isai. ix. 6.

^f Matth. xxvi. 52.

^g John xviii. 36.

^h Cum, ad, prope, juxta, as well as in.

thereof, we shall rather chuse to lay down some general rules for the reconciling seeming contradictions in scripture, which may be applied by us in other cases, where we meet with the like difficulties. As,

1. When two scriptures seem to contradict each other, we sometimes find that this arises from the inadvertency of some who have transcribed the copies of scripture, putting one word for another; though it may be observed,

(1.) That this is not often found, for as great care has been taken in transcribing the manuscripts of scripture, as in any manuscripts whatever, if not greater.

(2.) If there have been mistakes in transcribing, 'tis only in a few instances, where there is a likeness between two words, so that one might easily be mistaken for the other; and this ought not to prejudice any against the scripture, for it only argues, that though the inspired penmen were infallible, the scribes that took copies of scripture for common use were not so.

(3.) When there is any such mistake, it may generally be rectified by some other copy, that has the word as it really should be: it is so in our printed bibles, in some editions of them we find mistakes, as to some words that may be rectified by others, which are more correct; and if so, why may not this be supposed to be in some written copies thereof, that were used before printing, which is but a late invention, was known in the world, from which all our printed copies are taken?

2. When the same action in scripture seems to be ascribed to different persons, or the same thing said to be done in different places, there is no contradiction, for the same person, or place, is sometimes called by various names: thus Moses's father-in-law, who met him in the wilderness, and advised him in the settling the government of the people, is called, in one place, *Jethro*^h, and in another *Hobab*ⁱ; so the mountain, from which God gave the law to *Israel*, is sometimes called mount *Sinai*^k, and at other times *Horeb*^l.

3. Chronological difficulties, or seeming contradictions, arising from a differing number of years, in which the same thing is said to be done, may be reconciled, by computing them from differing epocha's, or beginnings of computation: as 'tis said^m, *The sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four*

hundred and thirty years; but, when God foretells this sojourning, 'tis saidⁿ, *Thy seed shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years*: now the four hundred and thirty years takes its beginning of computation from *Abraham's* being called to leave his country, and sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange land; this was four hundred and thirty years before *Israel* went out of *Egypt*; but the four hundred years mentioned in *Genesis*, during which time his seed should sojourn, takes its beginning of computation from his having the promised seed, or from the birth of *Isaac*, which was twenty five years after his leaving his country; from that time to the children of *Israel's* going out of *Egypt* was four hundred and five years; and the five years above four hundred are left out, as being an inconsiderable number, which is very agreeable to our common way of computing time, when a large even number is mentioned, to leave out a small one of four or five years, more or less, as in the instance here mentioned, especially when time is expressed by centuries, as it is here; for it is said, in *ver. 16. in the fourth generation*, that is, after the fourth century of years, *they shall come hither again*.

4. When, by comparing the years of the reign of several of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, mentioned in the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, we find that some are said, in one of them, to have reigned three or four years longer than the account of the years of their reign, mentioned by the other, the seeming contradiction may be reconciled, by considering him as beginning to reign before his father's death, as *Solomon* did before *David* died; or from his being nominated as his father's successor, and owned as such by the people, which was sometimes done to prevent disputes that might arise about the matter afterwards; and sometimes, when a king was engaged in foreign wars, in which he was obliged to be absent from his people, and the event hereof was uncertain, he appointed his son to reign in his absence, from which time he had the title of a king, though his father was living; or when a king was superannuated, or unfit to reign, as *Uzziah* was when smote with leprosy; or when he was weary of the fatigue and burden of government, he would settle his son, as his viceroy, in his life-time,

^h Exod. xviii. 1. ⁱ Numb. x. 29. ^k Exod. xix. 20. ^l Deut. i. 6. ^m Exod. xii. 40. ⁿ Gen. xv. 13.

40 Self-Contradiction unjustly charged on SCRIPTURE.

on which account the son is sometimes said to reign with his father: thus many account for that difficulty; in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9. where 'tis said, *Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign*; but in 2 Kings xxiv. 8. he is said to have been *eighteen years old when he began to reign*, the meaning is, that when he was eight years old, he was nominated as his father's successor; but when he was eighteen years old, he began to reign alone, his father being then dead.

5. Scriptures that seem to contradict one another may not treat of the same, but different subjects, as to the general design thereof: thus, that seeming contradiction between the Apostles Paul and James, is to be accounted for; the former says^o, *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ*; but the other says^p, *That by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*. The Apostle Paul speaks of a sinner's justification, or freedom from the condemning sentence of the law in the sight of God, which gives him a right to eternal life, in which respect he looks for it out of himself, and, by faith, depends alone on Christ's righteousness; in this sense, works do not justify: whereas the Apostle James, when he asserts, that *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only*, intends that our profession and sincerity therein is justified; that is evidenced, not by our having just notions of things, or an historical faith, such as the devils themselves have, but by those works of holiness, which are the fruits of it; this is the only justification he treats of, and therefore don't in the least contradict the Apostle Paul, who treats of another kind of justification, in which works are excluded.

6. When two scriptures seem to contradict one another, they may sometimes be reconciled, by considering the same thing absolutely in one place, and comparatively in the other: thus, in many scriptures, we are commanded to extend that love to every one in their several relations, which is due; and yet our Saviour says^q, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple*: this is to be understood comparatively, that is, our love to the creature ought to bear no proportion to that which is due to God.

7. Scriptures that seem to contradict

one another, often speak of different persons, or persons of differing characters: thus 'tis said^r, *Be ye merciful, as your father also is merciful*; or, *Judge not, that ye be not judged*^s. This respects persons in a private capacity, and therefore don't contradict those other scriptures that are applied to magistrates in the execution of publick justice; to such 'tis said^t, *Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot*.

8. Two contrary assertions may be both true in differing respects: thus our Saviour says in one place, *The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always*^u; and in another, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world*^x; these are both true, one respecting Christ's bodily presence, as man, in which respect he is not now with us; the other his spiritual and powerful influences, whereby he is always present with his people as God.

9. We must take notice of different times or dispensations, in which respect those laws or ordinances, which were to be received and observed as a rule of faith and duty at one time, may not be so at another: thus circumcision is recommended as a duty, and a privilege to the Jews before Christ's time, in which respect the Apostle reckons it among the *advantages* which they formerly had above all other nations^y; but when the gospel-dispensation was erected, and the Jewish oeconomy abolished, it was so far from being an advantage, that the observance of it was deem'd no less than a subversion of the gospel, as the Apostle says^z, *If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*; and the same Apostle gives a very diminutive character of those institutes of the ceremonial law, which he calls, in his time, *weak and beggerly elements*, such as had a tendency to bring them again *into bondage*, and blames them for observing the Jewish festivals, such as, *days, months, times and years*, to wit, the new moons, feasts of weeks, or of years, such as the seventh year, or the *Jubilees*, and tells them, on this occasion, *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain*^a; so that what was a duty and a privilege in one age of the church, and enjoined with the greatest strictness, and severest punishments, on those that neglected it, is forbid, as a sin in another age thereof, without the least shadow of

^o Gal. ii. 16.

^p James ii. 24.

^q Luke xiv. 26.

^r Chap. vi. 36.

^s Matth. vii. 1.

^t Deut. xix. 21.

^u Matth. xxvi. 11.

^x Chap. xxviii. 20.

^y Rom. iii. 1, 2.

^z Gal. v. 2.

^a Chap. iv. 9, 10, 11.

The Design of SCRIPTURE proves it divine. 41

contradiction between those scriptures, which either enjoin or forbid it: thus, when our Saviour first sent his twelve disciples to preach the gospel, he commanded them, *Not to go in the way of the Gentiles*^b; to wit, so long as he was here upon earth, or till they had finished their ministry among the *Jews*, to whom the word was first to be preached; but afterwards, when the gospel was to be spread throughout the world, he gave them a commission to *preach the gospel to all nations*^c; which accordingly they did, as apprehending there was no contradiction between the former prohibition and the present command.

IV. The divine authority of scripture may be further proved from the scope and design of the whole, which is to give all glory to God.

It may be observed, concerning the scripture, that the advancing the divine perfections, and debasing the creature, is the great end designed by God in giving it; and we find that whatever doctrine is laid down therein, this end is still pursued. Now scripture-doctrines are designed to advance the glory of God, either directly or by consequence.

1. As to the former of these, the scripture abounds with instances, in which God is adored or set forth, as the object of adoration, that is, as having all divine perfections, and as doing every thing becoming himself as a God of glory: thus he is described herein, as the *Lord most high and terrible; a great king over all the earth*^a; and *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders*^e; and as *the true God, the living God, and an everlasting king*^f; and as *the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments*^g; and it is also said, *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all*^h. These and such-like adorable perfections are not only occasionally ascribed to God in scripture, but every part thereof displays his glory in so illustrious a manner, as gives ground to conclude, that the great design of it is to raise in us becoming apprehensions of him, to put us upon adoring and worshipping him as God.

2. It may, by a just consequence, be said to give all the glory to him, as it represents the emptiness, and even nothingness of all creatures, when compared with him, and hereby recommends him, as all in all, when it speaks of the best of creatures, as vailing their faces before him, as acknowledging themselves unworthy to behold his glory, and as deriving all their happiness from him; and when it speaks of man as a sinful guilty creature, expecting all from him, and depending upon him for grace sufficient for him; and when it speaks of God, as the author and finisher of faith, in whom alone there is hope of obtaining mercy and forgiveness, grace here, and glory hereafter, and lays down this as the sum of all religion, we must certainly conclude that its design is to give all glory to God.

Now let us consider the force of this argument, or how the general scope and design of scripture, to give all glory to God, proves its divine authority. Had it been the invention and contrivance of men, or if the writers thereof had pretended they had received it by inspiration from God, and it had not been so, then the great design thereof would have been to advance themselves; and they would certainly have laid down such a scheme of religion therein, as is agreeable to the corrupt appetites and inclinations of men, or would tend to indulge and dispense with sin, and not such an one as sets forth the holiness of God, and his infinite displeasure against it.

And as for salvation, the penmen of scripture, had they not been inspired, would certainly have represented it as very easy to be attained, and not as a work of such difficulty as it really is; and they would also have propagated such a religion, as supposes the creature not dependent on, or beholden to God for this salvation, and then the scripture would have detracted from his glory; but since, on the other hand, its general design is to give him the glory due to his name, this is a convincing evidence of its divine original.

From the general design of scripture, as being to give all glory to God, we may infer,

(1.) That whenever we read the word of God, we ought to have this great design in view, and so not consider it barely as an historical narrative of things

^b Matt. x. 5. ^c Chap. xxviii. 19. ^d Psal. xlvii. 2. ^e Exod. xv. 11. ^f Jer. x. 10. ^g Dan. ix. 4.
^h 2 Chron. xxix. 11.

42 *The Penmen of SCRIPTURE faithful Men.*

done, but should observe how the glory of the divine perfections is set forth, that hereby we may be induced to ascribe greatness to God, and admire him for all the discoveries which he makes of himself therein.

(2.) The scriptures general design should be a rule to us in the whole of our conversation, wherein we ought to give all glory to God, whatever we receive or expect from him, or whatever duty we engage in, let us act as those, that not only take the scripture for our rule, but its general scope and design for our example.

(3.) Whatsoever doctrines, are pretended to be deduced from, or to contain the sense of scripture, which, notwithstanding, tend to depreciate the divine perfections, these are to be rejected, as contrary to its general scope and design.

V. Another argument may be taken from the character of the penmen of scripture; and here let them be supposed to be either good men, or bad; if good men, then they could not give themselves such a liberty to impose upon the world, and pretend that they received that from God, which they did not; and if they were bad men, they neither could nor would have laid down such doctrines, as center in, lead the soul to God, and tend to promote self-denial, and advance his glory in all things, since this is to suppose the worst of men to have the best ends, which we can never do; for, as our Saviour says¹, *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* He is speaking of false prophets, who were to be known by their fruits; wicked men will have bad designs, or are like the corrupt tree, which bringeth forth evil fruit. But, on the other hand, if persons deliver that which carries in it such internal evidence of divine truth, and have such a noble design in view as the securing the honour of God, and promoting his interest in the world, these must certainly be approved of by him, and concluded to be good men; and if so, then they would not impose a fallacy on the world, or say that the scripture was given by divine inspiration, when they knew it to be otherwise.

If the scriptures are not the word of God, then the penmen thereof have miserably deceived, not a small number of credulous people, but the whole Christian world, among whom we must al-

low that many were judicious, and such as would not easily suffer themselves to be imposed on; to which we may add, that others, to whom the gospel was preached, were exasperated enemies to those that preached it, and particularly to these inspired penmen of scripture, and greatly prejudiced against their doctrine, and therefore would use all possible endeavours to detect the fallacy, if there had been any; so that 'twas morally impossible for them to deceive the world in this instance, or make them believe that the scriptures were the word of God, if there had not been the strongest evidence to convince them of it, which they could not withstand or gainsay.

But that we may enter a little further into the character of the penmen of scripture, let it be observed,

1. That they could not be charged by their enemies with immoral practices, or notorious crimes, which might weaken the credit of the truths they delivered: they were, indeed, compassed about with like infirmities with other men; for 'tis not to be supposed, that, because they were inspired, therefore they were perfectly free from sin; since that does not necessarily follow from their having this privilege conferred upon them, yet their enemies themselves could find no great blemishes in their character, which might justly prejudice them against their writings, or that might render them unfit to be employ'd in this great work of transmitting the mind of God to the world.

2. They appear to be men of great integrity, not declining to discover and aggravate their own faults, as well as the sins of others. Thus *Moses*, though a man of great meekness, as to his general character, discovers his own failing, in repining and being uneasy, because of the untoward and turbulent spirit of the people, over whom he was appointed a governor, when he represents himself as complaining to God; *Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? I am not able to bear this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy*

¹ Mat. vii. 16.

sight;

fight; and let me not see mine own wretchedness^k. This was certainly a very great blemish in the character of this excellent man; but he does not attempt to conceal it; nor does he omit to mention his backwardness to comply with the call of God, to deliver his brethren out of their bondage in *Egypt*, but tells us what poor trifling excuses he made; as when he says^l, *O my Lord, I am not eloquent*; and when God answers him, by promising to supply this defect, he obstinately persists in declining this service, and says, *O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*, that is, by any one but my self; so that he who express'd such courage and resolution forty years before in defending the oppressed *Israelites*, and supposed that his brethren would have understood that God, by his hand, would deliver them, but they understood it not^m, when God really called him to deliver them, he obstinately refused to obey; and, indeed, whatever excuses he might make, the main thing that lay at the bottom was fear, and therefore, as a further inducement to it, God tells him, *the men were dead that sought his life*: all this he says concerning himself; and elsewhere he tells usⁿ, that he did not sanctify the name of God in the eyes of the people, but spake unadvisedly with his lips; and that, for this, God would not let him go into the land of *Canaan*, though he earnestly desired it.

And the prophet *Jeremiah* tells us, how he was ready to faint, and, in a murmuring way, curses the day of his birth^o, and seems almost determined *not to make mention of God, nor speak any more in his name*, because he had been put in the stocks by *Pashur*, and was derided and mocked by others, who were, indeed, below his notice.

And *David* discovered his own sin, though it was a very scandalous one, in the matter of *Uriah*^p; and prays, *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness*; which is a confession of his being guilty of murder.

The Apostles also discover their infirmities. Thus *Paul* discovers his furious temper, in persecuting the church before his conversion, and ranks himself amongst the chief of sinners^q; and how willing is *Matthew* to let the world know, that, before his conversion, he was a publican: thus he characterises himself^r,

and says^s, that when Christ called him, he sat at the receipt of custom; though the publicans were reckoned among the vilest of men for extortion, and other crimes, and were universally hated by the *Jews*.

Moreover, as the penmen of scripture expose their own crimes, so they do those of their nearest and dearest friends and relatives, which carnal policy would have inclined them to conceal. Thus *Moses* tells us how *Aaron* his brother made the golden calf, and so was the encourager and promoter of the people's idolatry; that it was he that *bid them break off the golden ear-rings, which he received at their hand, whereof he made a molten calf, and then built an altar before it*^t. Though the *Jewish* historian^u was so politick, as to conceal this thing, for the honour of his own nation; and therefore when he tells us, that *Moses* went up into the mount to receive the law, he says nothing of the scandalous crime, which the people were guilty of at the foot of the mountain at the same time.

Moreover, as they do not conceal their sins, so they sometimes declare the meanness of their extract, which shewed that they did not design to have honour from men. Thus *Amos* tells us^v, *He was among the herdmen of Tekoa*; and that he was not bred up in the schools of the prophets, which he intends, when he styles himself, *no prophet, neither a prophet's son*^w.

And the Evangelists occasionally tell the world how they were sea-faring men, when called to be Christ's Disciples, and so not bred up in the schools of learning among the *Jews*.

3. They were very far from being crafty or designing men; neither did they appear to be men that were able to manage an imposture of this nature, or frame a new scheme of religion, and, at the same time, make the world believe that it was from God. For,

(1.) None that read the scriptures can find any appearance of design in the penmen thereof, to advance themselves or families. *Moses*, indeed, had the burden of government, but he did not affect the pomp and splendor of a king; neither did he make any provision for his family, so as to advance them to great honours in the world, which it was in his power to have done: the laws he gave, render'd

^k Numb. xi. 11—15.

^l Exod. iv. 10, 13, 19. with Numb. xx. 10, 11, 12. and Deut. iii. 25—27. compared with ver. 14.

^m 1 Tim. i. 13, 15.

ⁿ Vid. Jos. Antiq.

^o Amos i. 1.

^p Acts vii. 24, 25.

^q Jer. xx. 7, 8, 14, 15, 16.

^r Matt. x. 3.

^s Chap. vii. 14.

^t Deut. xxxii. 51, 52, compared

^u Psal. li. the title

^v Chap. ix. 9.

^w Exod. xxxii.

44 *The Penmen of SCRIPTURE not imposed on.*

those of his own tribe, to wit, that of *Levi*, incapable of, and not designed for kingly government, and the highest honour of the priesthood, which was fixed in that tribe, was conferred on his brother's children, not his own.

(2.) The prophets were very few of them great men in the world, nor advanced to great places in the government; the esteem and reputation they had among the people at any time, was only for their integrity, and the honour conferred on them by God; and the Apostles were plain men, who drove on no design to gain riches and honours from those to whom they preached the gospel; but, on the other hand, they expected nothing but poverty, reproach, imprisonment, and, at last, to die a violent death: therefore, how can it be supposed that they were subtil designing men, who had some worldly advantage in view? 'Tis plain that they had no design but to do what God commanded, and to communicate what they had received from him, and shuned not to declare the whole counsel of God, whatever it cost them. The Apostle *Paul* was so far from endeavouring to enrich himself by preaching the gospel, that he tells the church, *I seek not yours, but you*^a; and how he was fortified against the afflictions, which he foresaw would attend his ministry, when he says^a, *I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, to be full, and to be hungry, to abound, and to suffer want*: and he was not only content to bear afflictions, but, when called to it, he professes himself to *take pleasure in reproach, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake*^b.

Hitherto we have proved, that the penmen of scripture were men of such a character, that they would not designedly impose on mankind. But some will say, might they not be imposed on themselves, and think they were divinely inspired, when they were not.

To this it may be answered, that if they were deceived or imposed on themselves, when they thought they received the scripture by divine inspiration, this must proceed from one of these two causes. Either,

1. They took what was the result of a heated fancy, a strong imagination, or raised affections for inspiration, as some of our modern Enthusiasts have done, who have prefaced their warnings, as they call them, with, *Thus saith the*

Lord, &c. when the Lord did not speak by them. And the Deists have the same notion of the prophets and inspired penmen of scripture, and esteem their writings no farther than as they contain the law of nature, or those doctrines that are self-evident, or might have been invented by the reason of man; and as such they receive them, without any regard to divine inspiration. Or,

2. If the inspired penmen of scripture were otherwise imposed on, it must be by a diabolick inspiration, of which, in other cases, the world has had various instances, when Satan is said (to use the Apostle's words) to *transform himself into an angel of light*^c; or has been suffered to deceive his followers, not only by putting forth *signs and lying wonders*, but impressing their minds with *strong delusions*, whereby they have *believed a lie*^d, as supposing it to proceed from divine inspiration; and, to give countenance thereto, has produced such violent agitations, tremblings or distortions in their bodies, as have seemed preternatural, not much unlike those with which the heathen oracles were delivered of old, which were called by some *a divine fury*; but this cannot, with any shadow of reason, be applied to the inspired writers, therefore they were not imposed on.

1. They did not mistake their own fancies for divine revelation.

To suppose that they did so, is not only to conclude that all revealed religion is a delusion; but that the church in all ages, and amongst them the wisest and best of men, have been Enthusiasts, and all their hope, founded on this revelation, has been no better than a vain dream. But it is one thing to assert, and another thing to prove; and because they who take this liberty to reproach the scriptures, pretend not to support their charge by argument, it might seem less necessary to make a reply: however, that our faith may be established, we shall briefly consider this objection. Therefore,

(1.) This charge is either brought against all that ever spake or wrote by divine inspiration, or only against some of them; if only some of them have been thus deluded, we might demand particular instances of any of the inspired writers, who are liable to this charge, together with the reasons thereof. If it be said, that some of them were men of less wisdom, or had not those advantages to improve their natural abilities, as others

^a 2 Cor. xii. 14.

^b Philip. iv. 11, 12.

^c 2 Cor. xii. 10.

^d 2 Cor. xi. 14.

^e 2 Thess. ii. 9, 11.
have

have had; this will not be sufficient to support their cause, since God can make use of what instruments he pleases, and endow them with wisdom in an extraordinary way, to qualify them for the service he calls them to, whereby the glory of his sovereignty more appears. If he pleases to chuse the *foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence*; shall he for this be called to an account by vain man? And it is certain, that some who have had this gift, have, as the consequence thereof, been endowed with such wisdom, as has tended to confound their most malicious enemies. But we will suppose that they, who bring this charge against the inspired writers, will not pretend to single out any among them; but accuse them all in general of Enthusiasm; and if this charge be grounded on the vain pretensions of some to inspiration in this age, in which we have no ground to expect this divine gift, will it follow, that because some are deluded, that therefore divine revelation, supported by incontestable evidence, was a delusion? Or if it be said, that some of old, whom we conclude to have been inspired, were called Enthusiasts, as *Jehu*, and his fellow-soldiers concluded the prophet to be, who was sent to anoint him king; nothing can be infer'd from thence, but that there were, in all ages, some Deists, who have treated things sacred with reproach and ridicule.

(2.) But if this charge be pretended to be supported by any thing that has the least appearance of an argument, it will be alledged, in defence thereof, that it is impossible for a person certainly to know himself to be inspired at any time; if that could be proved indeed, it would be something to the purpose; and inasmuch as we are obliged to assert the contrary, it will be demanded how it might be known that a person was under inspiration, or what are the certain marks by which we may conclude that the inspired writers were not mistaken in this matter? I confess, it is somewhat difficult to determine this question, especially since inspiration has so long ceased in the world; but we shall endeavour to answer it, by laying down the following propositions.

1. If some powerful and impressive influences of the Spirit of God on the souls of men, in the more common and ordinary methods of divine providence

and grace, have been not only experienced, but their truth and reality discerned by them, who have been favour'd therewith, so that, without pretending to inspiration, they had sufficient reason to conclude that they were divine; certainly when God was pleased to converse with men in such a way, as that which we call inspiration, it was not impossible for them to conclude that they were inspired, which is an argument taken from the less to the greater.

2. There were some particular instances, in which it seem'd absolutely necessary, that they who received intimations from God in such a way, should have infallible evidence that they were not mistaken, especially when some great duty was to be performed by them, pursuant to a divine command, in which it would be a dangerous thing for them to be deceived; as in the case of *Abraham's* offering up his son; and *Jacob's* going with his family into *Ægypt*, which was a forsaking the promised land, an exposing them to the loss of their religion, through the influence or example of those with whom they went to sojourn; and it might be uncertain whether they should ever return or no, therefore he needed a divine warrant, enquired of God with respect to this matter, and doubtless had some way to be infallibly assured concerning the divine will relating hereunto. Moreover, our Saviour's disciples, leaving their families, going into the most remote parts of the world to propagate the gospel, which they had received in this way, evinces the necessity of their knowing themselves to be under a divine inspiration: and if they had been deceived in this matter, would they not have been reprov'd for it by him, whose intimations they are supposed to have followed in the simplicity of their hearts?

3. As to the way by which God might convince them, beyond all manner of doubt, that he spake to them who were under divine inspiration, there are various ways that might have been taken, and probably were. As,

(1.) Sometimes extraordinary impressions were made on the soul of the prophet arising from the immediate access of God to it: of this we have frequent instances in scripture; as in that particular vision which *Daniel* saw, which occasion'd his *comeliness to be turn'd into corruption, and his having no strength*; and the vision of our Saviour, which *John* saw, the

^c 1 Cor. i. 27, 29.

^f 2 Kings ix. 11.

^g Gen. xlv. 2, 3, 4.

^h Dan. x. 8.

46 *The Penmen of SCRIPTURE not deluded by Satan.*

effect whereof was his falling at his feet as deadⁱ; and many other instances of the like nature might be refer'd to, which were, at least, antecedent to inspiration, and the result of the access of God to the soul, which occasioned such a change in nature, as could not but be discern'd after the person had a little recovered himself. But if it be said, that such an effect as this might be produced by an infernal spirit, the answer I would give to that is, that supposing this possible, yet it must be proved that God would suffer it, especially in such an instance, in which his own cause was so much concerned; and besides, it is not improbable that the soul of the prophet was sometimes brought into such a frame of spirit, as resembled the heavenly state, as much as 'tis possible for any one to attain to in this world; such an intercourse as this made *Jacob* say, *This is no other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*^k.

(2.) As this converse with God contained in it something supernatural and very extraordinary in the effects thereof, so 'tis not improbable that God might work miracles, of various kinds, to confirm the prophet's belief as to this matter, though they are not particularly recorded in all the instances in which we read of inspiration; and this would be as full an evidence as could be desired.

If it be objected, that 'tis not probable that miracles were always wrought to give this conviction: I would not be too peremptory in pretending to determine this matter, 'tis sufficient to say they were sometimes wrought; but, however, there were, doubtless, some other concurring circumstances, which put the thing out of all dispute, for not to suppose this, is to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God, as well as to depreciate one of the greatest honours which he has been pleased to confer upon men. Thus we have consider'd the unreasonableness of the charge brought against the inspired penmen of scripture, as though they were imposed on, by mistaking their Enthusiastick fancies for divine revelation. We proceed to consider,

2. That they were not imposed upon by the Devil, as mistaking some impressions made by him on their minds, for divine revelation; this is evident; for,

1. Divine inspiration was not only occasional, or confer'd in some particular instances, with a design to amuse the

world, or confirm some doctrines which were altogether new, impure and subversive of the divine glory in some ages thereof, when men were universally degenerate, and had cast off God and religion; but it was continued in the church for many ages, when they evidently appeared to be the peculiar objects of the divine regard; and therefore,

2. God would never have suffered the Devil, in such circumstances of time and things, to have deluded the world, and that in such a degree, as that he should be the author of that rule of faith, which he designed to make use of to propagate his interest therein; so that his people should be beholden to their grand enemy for those doctrines which were transmitted by inspiration.

3. Satan would have acted against his own interest, should he have inspired men to propagate a religion, which has a direct tendency to overthrow his own kingdom; in which instance, as our Saviour observes, *His kingdom would be divided against it self*^l. As it is contrary to the wisdom and holiness of God to suffer it, so Satan would never have done it out of choice, and he has too much subtilty to do it through mistake; therefore the inspired writers could not be imposed on by any infernal spirit.

And to this we may add, that this could not be done by a good angel; for if such a one had pretended herein to have imitated, or, as it were, usurped the throne of God, he would not have deserved the character of a good angel; therefore it follows that they could not have been inspired by any but God himself.

Having consider'd that the penmen of scripture have faithfully transmitted to us what they received by divine inspiration, we must now take notice of some things which are alledged by those who endeavour not only to depreciate, but overthrow the divine authority of the sacred writings, when they alledge that they were only inspired, as to the substance or general *Idea* of what they committed to writing, and were left to express the things contained therein in their own words, which, as they suppose, hath occasioned some contradictions, which they pretend to be found therein, arising from the treachery of their memories, or the unsuitness, of their stile, to express what had been communicated to them. This they found on the difference of

ⁱ Rev. i. 17.

^k Gen. xxviii. 17.

^l Matt. xii. 25, 26.

style observed in the various books thereof; as some are written in an elegant and lofty style, others clouded with mystical and dark expressions; some are more plain, others are laid down in an argumentative way; all which differing ways of speaking they suppose agreeable to the character of the inspired writers thereof; so that, though the matter contains in it something divine, the words and phrases, in which 'tis deliver'd, can hardly be reckoned so.

And as for some books of scripture, especially those that are historical, they suppose that these might be written without inspiration, and that some of them were taken from the histories which were then in being, or some occurrences which were observed in the days in which the writers lived, and were generally known and believed in those times, to which they more immediately relate.

And as for those books of scripture, which are more especially doctrinal, they suppose that there are many mistakes in them, but that these respect only doctrines of less importance; whereas the providence of God has prevented them from making any gross or notorious blunders, subversive of natural religion; so that the scripture may be deemed sufficient to answer the general design thereof, in propagating religion in the world, though we are not obliged to conclude that it is altogether free from those imperfections that will necessarily attend such a kind of inspiration.

Ans. If this account of scripture be true, it would hardly deserve to be called the word of God; therefore, that we may vindicate it from this aspersion, let it be consider'd,

1. As to the different styles observed in the various books thereof, it does not follow from hence, that the penmen were left to deliver what they received, in their own words; for certainly 'twas no difficult matter for the Spirit of God to furnish the writers thereof with words, as well as matter, and to inspire them to write in a style agreeable to what they used in other cases, whereby they might better understand and communicate the sense thereof to those to whom it was first given; as if a person should send a message by a child, 'tis an easy matter to put such words into his mouth as are agreeable to his common way of speaking, without leaving the matter to him to express it in his own words: thus the inspired wri-

ters might be furnished with words by the Holy Ghost, adapted to that style which they commonly used, without supposing they were left to themselves to clothe the general *Ideas* with their own words.

2. As to what is said concerning the historical parts of scripture, that 'tis not necessary for them to have been transmitted to us by divine inspiration, it may be reply'd, that these, as well as other parts thereof, *were written for our learning*^m; so that what is excellent in the character of persons, is designed for our imitation; their blemishes and defects, to humble us under a sense of the universal corruption of human nature, and the evil consequences thereof, to awaken our fears, and dehort us from exposing ourselves to the same judgments which were inflicted as the punishment of sin; and the account we have of the providential dealings of God with his church, in the various ages thereof, is of use to put us upon admiring and adoring the divine perfections, as much as the doctrinal parts of scripture; and therefore 'tis necessary that we have the greatest certainty that the inspired writers have given us a true narration of things, and consequently that the words, as well as the matter, are truly divine.

3. When, that they may a little palliate the matter, they allow that the inspired writers, though left to the weakness of their memory, and the impropriety of their style, were, notwithstanding, preserved, by the interposure of divine providence, from committing mistakes in matters of the highest importance; it may be replied, That it will be very difficult for them to assign what doctrines are of greater, and what of less importance, in all the instances thereof, or wherein providence has interposed, to prevent their running into mistakes, and when it has not; so that we are still at an uncertainty what doctrines are delivered to us, as they were received by inspiration, and what are misrepresented by the penmen of scripture; and we shall be ready to conclude, that in every section or paragraph thereof, somethings may be true, and others false; some doctrines divine, and others human, while we are left without any certain rule to distinguish one from the other, and accordingly we cannot be sure that any part of it is the word of God; so that such a revelation as this would be of no real service to the church, and our faith would

^m Rom. xv. 4.

48 SCRIPTURE preserv'd and confirm'd by Miracles.

be founded in the wisdom, or rather weakness, of men, and our religion, depending on it, could not be truly divine; so that this method of reasoning is, to use the word inspiration, but to destroy all the valuable ends thereof.

VI. Another argument, to prove the scriptures to be the word of God, may be taken from their antiquity and wonderful preservation for so many ages; this appears more remarkable, if we consider,

1. That many other writings, of much later date, have been lost, and nothing more is known of them, but that there were once such books in the world; and books might more easily be lost, when there were no other but written copies of them, and these procured with much expence and difficulty, and consequently their number proportionably small.

2. That the scripture should be preserved, notwithstanding all the malice of its avowed enemies, as prompted hereunto by Satan, whose kingdom is overthrown by it. Had it been in his power, he would certainly have utterly abolished and destroyed it; but yet it has been preserved unto this day, which discovers a wonderful hand of providence; and would God so remarkably have taken care of a book, that pretends to advance itself by bearing the character of a divinely inspired writing, if it had not been really so? Which leads us to the next argument, containing an evidence, which is more convincing than any other; or, at least, if this be added to those arguments which have been already given, I hope it will more abundantly appear that the scriptures are the word of God; since,

VII. The divine authority thereof is attested by God himself; and if, in other cases, *we receive the witness of men*, surely, as the Apostle observes, *the witness of God is greater* ^a.

Now the testimony of God to the authority of scripture is twofold; *First*, extraordinary; *Secondly*, ordinary; the extraordinary testimony of God is that of miracles; the ordinary is taken from the use which he makes of it, in convincing and converting sinners, and building believers up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

1. As to the former of these, God has attested the truth hereof by miracles. A miracle is an extraordinary divine work,

whereby something is produced, contrary to the common course and laws of nature: thus the magicians confess'd, that one of the miracles which *Moses* wrought was the *finger of God* ^o. Of these there are many undeniable instances recorded in scripture, both in the old and new testament; and these being above the power of a creature, and works peculiar to God, they contain a divine testimony to the truth that is confirmed thereby, for the confirmation whereof an appeal was made to them. Now when we say that the divine authority of scripture was confirmed by miracles, we mean,

(1.) That God has wrought miracles to testify his approbation of most of the Prophets and Apostles, who were the inspired writers thereof, whereby their mission was declared to be divine; and we can't think that God, who knows the hearts and secret designs of men, would employ or send any to perform so great and important a work, if he knew them to be disposed to deceive and impose on the world; or that they would, in any instance, call that his word which they did not receive from him. The reason why men sometimes employ unfaithful servants about their work is, because they don't know them; they never do it out of choice, and therefore we can't suppose that God, who perfectly knows the hearts of men, would do so; therefore, having not only employ'd the penmen of scripture as his servants, but confirmed their mission, and testified his approbation of them, by miracles, this is a ground of conviction to us that they would not have pretended the scriptures to be the word of God if they were not so.

Now that miracles have been wrought for this end, I think, needs no proof; for we are assured hereof, not barely by the report of those prophets, whose mission is supposed to have been confirmed thereby, but it was universally known, and received in the church, in those times, in which they were wrought, and it is not pretended to be denied, by its most inveterate enemies; the truth hereof, *viz.* that *Moses*, and several other of the prophets, and our Saviour, and his Apostles, wrought miracles, can hardly be reckon'd a matter in controversy; for it is a kind of scepticism to deny it: and it is certain, that herein they appealed to God for the confirmation of their mission; as *Elijah* is said explicitly to have done, when he prays to this effect;

^a 1 John v. 9.

^o Exod. viii. 19.

The HOLY SCRIPTURES confirmed by Miracles. 49

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant; and that I have done all these things at thy word^p; and we read, that God answered him accordingly, *By the fire from heaven consuming the burnt sacrifice*^q, &c.

(2.) Such appeals to God, and answers from him, have attained their end, by giving conviction to those who were more immediately concerned; this is evident from what is said; in that the same prophet, having had his request granted him, when God wrought a miracle, in raising the dead child to life, the woman of *Zarephath* confessed, that by this she knew *that he was a man of God, and that the word of the Lord, in his mouth, was truth*^r. And it is not denied by the *Jews*, the most irreconcilable enemies to Christianity, that what is related in the new testament, concerning our Saviour's, and his Apostles, working miracles, was true in fact; but the only thing denied by them is, that this was a divine testimony, or that they were wrought by the hand of God; and therefore the common reproach which is cast on them is, that they were wrought by magick art, as the *Jews* of old objected to our Saviour, *that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils*^s; and his reply to them was unanswerable, when he said, that this objection would argue *Satan divided against himself*; intimating, that he would never take such a method as this to overthrow the Christian religion, which he could not but know was more conducive to the establishment of it, than any other that could be used.

Object. 1. But if it be objected, that though miracles were wrought to confirm the mission of several of the prophets, yet none were wrought to confirm the divine authority of the subject matter of the scriptures.

Answer. To this it may be easily answer'd; that it is sufficient if we can prove that God has given his testimony, that he made choice of those prophets to declare his mind and will to the world; and that he has accordingly deemed them fit to be credited, and that they were not men liable to any suspicion of carrying on a design to deceive the world; so that if God himself not only styles them holy men, as he does all the inspired writers in general, when he says^t, *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*,

but also wrought miracles to prove that they were his servants and messengers, employ'd in this work; this is as convincing a testimony, as though every part of scripture wrote by them had been confirmed by a miracle. Besides, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the church that lived in those ages, in which the various parts of scripture were wrote, had some extraordinary proofs of their divine authority; since, in many of them, miracles were very common, and, at the same time that the penmen of scripture had the gift of inspiration, others had, what the Apostle calls, a *discerning of spirits*^u; so that they were enabled, by this means, to know whether the prophet, that pretended to inspiration, was really inspired: this, to me, seems, very probably, the sense of the Apostle, when he says^x, *The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets*; for he is discoursing before of prophets, speaking by divine revelation, and others judging thereof; now if there was this extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits in the ages, in which particular books of scripture were wrote, they who were favoured herewith, had a convincing testimony of the inspiration of the Prophets and Apostles, from the same Spirit by whom they were inspired, by which means the divine authority of scripture was infallibly known to them, and so imparted to others for their farther confirmation as to this matter.

Object. 2. We are not now to expect miracles to confirm our faith, as to the divine original of scripture; therefore how can we be said to have a divine testimony.

Answer. As miracles are now ceased, so such a method of confirming divine revelation is not necessary in all succeeding ages: God did not design to make that dispensation too common, nor to continue the evidence it affords, when there was no necessity thereof. Thus when the *Scribes and Pharisees* came to our Saviour, desiring to *see a sign* from him^y, he would not comply with their unreasonable demand; and the Apostle *Paul* takes notice of this humour prevailing among the *Jews* in his time, who then *required a sign*^z; but, instead of complying with them herein, he refers them to the success of the gospel, which is *the power of God to salvation*, as the only testimony to the truth thereof that was then needful; and our Saviour, in the parable, intimates,

^p 1 Kings xviii. 36.

^q Ver. 38.

^r 1 Kings xvii. 21—24.

^s Matt. xii. 24.

^t 2 Pet. i. 21:

^u 1 Cor. xii. 10.

^x 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

^y Matt. xii. 38.

^z 1 Cor. i. 22.

50 *How far the Testimony of the Church is to be regarded.*

that the truth of divine revelation has been so well attested, that *they who believe not Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*^a. Therefore, since we have such a convincing evidence hereof, it is an unreasonable degree of obstinacy to refuse to believe the divine authority of scripture, merely because miracles are not now wrought; since, to demand a farther proof of it, is no other than a tempting God, or disowning that what he has done is sufficient for our conviction; and to say, that for want of this evidence, our faith is not founded on a divine testimony, is nothing to the purpose, unless it could be proved that it is not founded on such a testimony formerly given, the contrary to which is undeniably evident, since we have this truth confirmed by the confession of the church in all the ages thereof, and therefore we have as much ground to believe this matter, as though miracles were wrought every day for its confirmation. This will farther appear, if we consider the abundant ground we have to conclude that God has formerly given such a testimony to his word; which leads us to enquire how far the testimony of the church, in all the ages thereof, is to be regarded.

The church has given its suffrage, throughout all the ages thereof, to the divine original of scripture, how much soever it has perverted the sense of it. That this argument may be set in a true light, let us consider what the papists say to this matter, when they appeal to the church, to establish the divine authority of scripture; and wherein we differ from them; and how far its testimony is to be regarded, as a means for our farther conviction. We are far from asserting, with them, that the churches testimony alone is to be regarded, without the internal evidence of the divine authority of scripture, as though that were the principal, if not the only foundation on which our faith is built. If, indeed, they could prove the infallibility of the church, we should more readily conclude the infallibility of its testimony; but all their attempts of this nature are vain and trifling.

Moreover, we don't mean altogether the same thing by the Church as they do, when they intend by it a council convened together, to decree and establish matters of faith, by him whom they pretend to be the visible head thereof; and so

a majority of votes of a body of men, every one of whom are liable to error, must determine, and, according to them, give a divine sanction to our faith. Nor do we think that those, whom they call the fathers of the church, are to be any farther regarded, than as they prove what they assert, since there is scarce any error or absurdity but what some or other of them have given in to. We also distinguish between the churches testimony, that the scripture was given by divine inspiration, and the sense they give of many of its doctrines: as to the latter of these, it has given us ground enough to conclude that its judgment is not much to be depended upon; however, we find that, in all ages, it has given sufficient testimony to this truth, that the scriptures are the word of God, and that they have been proved to be so, by the seal which God has set thereunto; to wit, by the miracles that have been wrought to confirm it. If therefore God has had a church in the world, or a remnant whom he has preserved faithful; and if their faith, and all their religion, and hope of salvation, has been founded, without the least exception, on this truth, that the scriptures are the word of God, we cannot altogether set aside this argument. But there is yet another which we lay more stress on, namely, the use which God has made of it, which is the second thing to be consider'd, *viz.*

2. His ordinary method of attesting this truth; it appears therefore, as is farther observed in this answer, that the scriptures are the word of God, from their light and power, to convince and convert sinners, and to comfort and build up believers to salvation. Here let us consider,

1. That the work of conviction and conversion is, and has been at all times, experienced by those who have had any right or claim to salvation, of which there have not only been various instances, in all ages, but the very being of the church, which supposes and depends thereon, is an undeniable proof of it.

2. As this work is truly divine, so the scriptures have been the principal, if not the only direct means, by which it has been brought about; so that we have never had any other rule, or standard of faith, or revealed religion; nor has the work of Grace been ever begun, or carried on, in the souls of any, without it; from whence it evidently appears,

^a Luke xvi. 31.

that God makes use of it to propagate and advance his interest in the world, and has given his church ground to expect his presence with it, in all his ordinances, in which they are obliged to pay a due regard to scripture; and, in so doing, they have found that their expectation has not been in vain, since God has, by this means, manifested himself to them, and made them partakers of spiritual privileges, which have been the beginning of their salvation.

3. It cannot be supposed that God would make this use of his word, and thereby put such an honour upon it, had it been an imposture, or born the specious pretence of being instamp'd with his authority, if it had not been so; for that would be to give countenance to a lie, which is contrary to the holiness of his nature.

Thus we have consider'd the several arguments, whereby the scripture appears to be the word of God; but since multitudes are not convinced hereby, we have, in the close of this answer, an account of the means whereby Christians come to a full persuasion as to this matter, and that is the testimony of the Spirit in the heart of man, which is the next thing to be consider'd. By this we do not understand that extraordinary impression which some of old have been favoured with, who are said to have been *moved by the Holy Ghost*, or to have had an extraordinary *unction from the Holy One*, whereby they were led into the knowledge of divine truths, in a way of supernatural illumination. This we pretend not to, since extraordinary gifts are ceased; yet it does not follow from hence, that the Spirit does not now influence the minds of believers in an ordinary way, whereby they are led into, and their faith confirmed in all necessary truths, and this in particular, that the scriptures are the word of God; for we may observe, that no privilege, referring to salvation, was ever taken away, but some other, subservient to the same end, has been substituted in the room thereof, especially, unless a notorious forfeiture has been made of it, and the church, by apostacy, has excluded it self from an interest in the divine regard; but this cannot be said of the gospel-church, in all the ages thereof, since extraordinary gifts have ceased; therefore we must conclude, that, being destitute of that way, by which this truth was once confirm'd, believers have, instead of it, an inward conviction wrought by the Spirit of God, agreeable to his present

method of acting, otherwise this present gospel-dispensation is, in a very material circumstance, much inferior to that in which God discovered his mind and will to man in an extraordinary way.

But that we may explain what we mean by this inward testimony of the Spirit in the hearts of men, whereby they are fully perswaded that the scriptures are the word of God, let it be consider'd,

(1.) That it is something more than barely a power, or faculty of reasoning, to prove the scriptures to be divine, since that is common to all; but this is a special privilege, given to those who are hereby fully perswaded of this truth. Moreover, there may be a power of reasoning, and yet we may be mistaken in the exercise thereof; and therefore this is not sufficient fully to perswade us that they are the word of God, and consequently something more than this is intended in this answer.

(2.) It is something short of inspiration, therefore, though the scripture was known to be the word of God, by the Spirit of inspiration, so long as that dispensation continued in the church, yet that privilege being now ceased, the internal testimony of the Spirit contains a lower degree of illumination, which has nothing miraculous attending it; and therefore falls short of inspiration.

(3.) It is not an Enthusiastick impulse, or strong impression upon our minds, whereby we conclude a thing to be true, because we think it is so; this we by no means allow of, since our own fancies are not the standard of truth, how strong soever our *Ideas* of things may be; therefore,

(4.) This inward testimony of the Spirit contains in it a satisfying and establishing persuasion, that the scriptures are the word of God, not altogether destitute of other evidences, or convincing arguments; and that which is more especially convincing to weak Christians, is taken from the use which God makes of the scripture, in beginning and carrying on the work of Grace in their souls, who are thus convinced; and this firm persuasion we find sometimes so deeply rooted in their hearts, that they would sooner die ten thousand deaths than part with scripture, or entertain the least slight thought of it, as though it were not divine; and certainly there is a special hand of God in this persuasion, which we can call no other than the inward testimony of the Spirit, whereby they are established in this important truth.

QUEST.

52 The principal Matters contained in SCRIPTURE.

QUEST. V. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

ANSW. The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

HAVING, in the foregoing answer, proved the scriptures to be the word of God, there is in this a general account of the contents thereof: there are many great doctrines contained therein, all which may be reduced to two heads, to wit, what we are to believe, and what we are to do. All religion is contained in these two things, and so we may apply the words of the Apostle to this case, *Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum^b*; and accordingly, as this Catechism is deduced from scripture, it contains two parts, viz, what we are to believe, and in what instances we are to yield obedience to the law of God. And that the scriptures principally teach these two things, appears from the Apostle's advice to Timothy, *Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love^c*.

From the scripture's principally teaching us matters of faith and practice, we infer, that *faith without works is dead*; or that he is not a true Christian who yields an assent to divine revelation, without a practical subjection to God, in all ways of holy obedience, as the Apostle observes, and gives a challenge, to this effect, to those who separate faith from works; *Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works^d*; and, on the other hand, works without faith are unacceptable. A blind obedience, or ignorant performance, of some of the external parts of religion, without the knowledge of divine truth, is no better than what the Apostle calls *bodily exercise, which profiteth little^e*: therefore we ought to examine our selves whether our faith be founded on, or truly deduced from scripture; and whether it be a practical faith, or, as the Apostle says, such as *worketh by love^f*; whether we grow in knowledge, as well as in zeal and diligence, in performing many duties of religion, if we would approve our selves sincere Christians.

^b Heb. viii. 1.
19, 20.

^c 2 Tim. i. 13.
^h John xiv. 22.

^d James ii. 17, 18.
ⁱ Gen. xviii. 17.

^e 1 Tim. iv. 8.

^f Gal. v. 6.

^g Psal. cxlvii.

QUEST. VI. *What do the scriptures make known of God?*

ANSW. The scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, the decrees, and the execution of his decrees.

IT is an amazing instance of condescension, and an inexpressible favour which God bestows on man, that he should manifest himself to him, and that not only in such a way as he does to all mankind, by the light of nature, which discovers that he is; but that he should, in so glorious a way, declare what he is, as he does in his word: this is a distinguishing privilege, as the Psalmist observes, when speaking of God's *shewing his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel^g*, he mentions it, as an instance of discriminating grace, in that *he has not dealt so with any other nation*. This raised the admiration of one of Christ's disciples, when he said, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not unto the world^h*? And it is still more wonderful, that he should discover to man what he does, or rather what he has decreed or purposed to do, and so should impart his secrets to him; how familiarly does God herein deal with man! Thus he says concerning the holy patriarch of old, *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I doⁱ*? However, it is one thing to know the secret purposes of God, and another thing to know the various properties thereof; the former of these, however known of old, by extraordinary intimation, are now known to us only by the execution of them; the latter is what we may attain to the knowledge of, by studying the scriptures.

Now as the scriptures make known, *First*, what God is; *Secondly*, the Persons in the Godhead; *Thirdly*, his Decrees; And, *Fourthly*, the Execution thereof; so we are directed hereby in the method to be observed in treating of the great doctrines of our religion; and accordingly the first part of this Catechism, which treats of doctrinal subjects, contains an enlargement on these four general heads: the first whereof we proceed to consider.

QUEST.

QUEST. VII. *What is God?*

ANSW. God is a Spirit, in and of himself, infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection, all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, every where present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

BEFORE we proceed to consider the divine perfections, as contain'd in this answer, let it be premised,

1. That it is impossible for any one to give a perfect description of God, since he is incomprehensible, therefore no words can fully express, or set forth, his perfections; when the wisest men on earth speak of him, they soon betray their own weakness, or discover, as *Elibu* says, that they *cannot order their speech, by reason of darkness^k*; or that they are *but of yesterday, and know, comparatively, nothing^l*. We are but like children, talking of matters above them, which their tender age can take in but little of, when we speak of the infinite perfections of the divine nature; *This knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain to it^m. How little a portion is heard of himⁿ?*

2. Though God cannot be perfectly described; yet there is something of him that we may know, and ought to make the matter of our study and diligent enquiries. When his glory is set forth in scripture, we are not to look upon the expressions there made use of, as words without any manner of *Ideas* affixed to them; for it is one thing to have adequate *Ideas* of an infinitely perfect being, and another thing to have no *Ideas* at all of him; neither are our *Ideas* of God to be reckoned, for this reason, altogether false, though they are imperfect; for it is one thing to think of him in an unbecoming way, not agreeable to his perfections, or to attribute the weakness and imperfection to him which don't belong to his nature, and another thing to think

of him, with the highest and best conceptions we are able to entertain, of his infinite perfections, while, at the same time, we have a due sense of our own weakness, and the shallowness of our capacities. When we thus order our thoughts concerning the great God, though we are far from comprehending his infinite perfections, yet our conceptions are not to be concluded erroneous, when directed by his word; which leads us to consider how we may conceive aright of the divine perfections; that we may not think or speak of God that which is not right, though at best we know but little of his glory; and in order thereunto,

(1.) We must first take an estimate of finite perfections, which we have some *Ideas* of, though not perfect ones in all respects; such as power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, &c.

(2.) Then we must conceive that these are eminently, though not formally, in God; that is, there is no perfection in the creature, but we must ascribe the same to God, though not in the same way; or thus, whatever perfection is in the creature, the same is in God, and infinitely more, or it is in God, but not in such a finite, limited, or imperfect way, as it is in the creature; *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know^o?* Therefore,

(3.) When the same words are used that import a perfection in God, and in the creature, viz. wisdom, power, &c. we must not suppose that these words import the same thing in their different application; for when they are applied to the creature, though we call them perfections, yet they are, at best, but finite, and have many imperfections attending them, all which we must separate or abstract in our thoughts, when the same words are used to set forth any divine perfection: thus knowledge is a perfection of the human nature, and the same word is used to denote a divine perfection; yet we must consider, at the same time, that *the Lord seeth not as man seeth^p*. The same may be said of all his other perfections; he worketh not as man worketh; whatever perfections are ascribed to the creature, they are to be consider'd, as agreeable to the subject in which they are; so when the same words are used to set forth any of the divine per-

^k Job xxxvii. 19.
^p 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

^l Chap. viii. 9.

^m Psal. cxxxix. 6.

ⁿ Job xxvi. 14.

^o Psal. xciv. 9, 10.

fections, they are to be understood in a way becoming a God of infinite perfection.

This has given occasion to divines to distinguish the perfections of God, into those that are communicable, and incommunicable.

1. The communicable perfections of God are such, whereof we find some faint resemblance in intelligent creatures, though, at the same time, there is an infinite disproportion; as when we speak of God as holy, wise, just, powerful, or faithful, we find something like these perfections in the creature, though we are not to suppose them, in all respects, the same as they are in God; they are in him, in his own, that is, an infinite way; they are in us, in our own, that is, a finite and limited way.

2. The incommunicable perfections of God are such, of which there is not the least shadow, or similitude in creatures, but they rather represent him as opposed to them. Thus when we speak of him as infinite, incomprehensible, unchangeable, without beginning, independent, &c. these perfections contain in them an account of the vast distance that there is between God and the creature, or how infinitely he exceeds all other beings, and is opposed to every thing that argues imperfection in them.

From this general account we have given of the divine perfections, we may infer,

1. That there is nothing common between God and the creature, that is, there is nothing which belongs to the divine nature that can be attributed to the creature; and nothing proper to the creature is to be applied to God: yet there are some rays of the divine glory, which may be beheld as shining forth, or display'd in the creature, especially in the intelligent part of the creation, angels, and men, who are, for that reason, represented as made after the divine image.

2. Let us never think or speak of the divine perfections but with the highest reverence, lest we take his name in vain, or debase him in our thoughts; *Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?*^a And whenever we compare God with the creatures, viz. angels and men, that bear somewhat of his image, let us, at the same time, abstract in our thoughts, all their imperfections, whether natural or moral, from him, and consider the infinite disproportion

that there is between him and them. We now come to consider the perfections of the divine nature, in the order in which they are laid down in this answer.

I. God is a Spirit, that is, an immaterial substance, without body or bodily parts; this he is said to be in *John* iv. 24. But if it be enquired what we mean by a Spirit, let it be premised, that we cannot fully understand what our own spirits, or souls are, we know less of the nature of Angels, a higher kind of Spirits, and least of all of the spirituality of the divine nature; however, our *Ideas* first begin at what is finite, in considering the nature and properties of Spirits; and from thence we are led to conceive of God as infinitely more perfect than any finite spirit. Here we shall consider the word Spirit, as applied more especially to Angels, and the souls of men; and let it be observed,

1. That a Spirit is the most perfect and excellent being; the soul is more excellent than the body, or indeed than any thing that is purely material; so Angels are the most perfect and glorious part of the creation, as they are spiritual beings, in some things excelling the souls of men.

2. A Spirit is, in its own nature, immortal; it has nothing in its frame and constitution that tends to corruption, as there is in material things, which consist of various parts, that may be dissolved or separated, and their form altered, which is what we call corruption; but this belongs not to Spirits, which are liable to no change in their nature; but by the immediate hand of God, who can, if he pleases, reduce them again to their first nothing.

3. A Spirit is capable of understanding, and willing, and putting forth actions agreeable thereunto, which no other being can do: thus, though the sun is a glorious and useful being; yet, because 'tis material, 'tis not capable of thought, or any moral action, such as angels, and the souls of men, can put forth.

Now these conceptions of the nature and properties of finite spirits, lead us to conceive of God as a Spirit. And,

(1.) As spirits excel all other creatures, we must conclude God to be the most excellent and perfect of all beings, and also that he is *incorruptible, immortal, and invisible*, as he is said to be in scripture.

^a Job xiii. 11.

^b Rom. i. 23. and 1 Tim. i. 17.

Moreover, it follows from hence, that he has an understanding and will, and so we may conceive of him as the creator and governor of all things; this he could not be, if he were not an intelligent and sovereign being, and particularly a Spirit.

(2.) The difference between other spiritual substances and God, is, that all their excellency is only comparative, viz. as they excel the best of all material beings in their nature and properties; but God, as a Spirit, is infinitely more excellent, not only than all material beings, but than all created spirits. Their perfections are derived from him, and therefore he is called, *The Father of spirits*^t; and *the God of the spirits of all flesh*^u; but his perfections are underived: other spirits are, as we have observed, in their own nature, immortal, yet God can reduce them to nothing; but God is independently immortal, and therefore 'tis said of him, that *he only hath immortality*^x.

Finite spirits, indeed, have understanding and will, but these powers are contained within certain limits; whereas God is an infinite Spirit, and therefore it can be said of none but him, that *his understanding is infinite*^y.

From God's being a Spirit, we may infer,

1. That he is the most suitable good to the nature of our souls, which are spirits; he can communicate himself, and apply those things to them, which tend to make them happy, as the God and Father of spirits.

2. He is to be worshipped in a spiritual manner^z, that is, with our whole souls, and in a way becoming his spiritual nature; therefore,

3. We are to frame no similitude or resemblance of him in our thoughts, as though he were a corporeal or material being; neither are we to make any pictures of him. This God forbids *Israel* to do^a, and tells them, that they had not the least pretence for so doing, inasmuch as they *saw no similitude of him, when he spake to them in Horeb*; and to make an image of him would be to *corrupt themselves*.

II. God is said to be in, and of, himself, not as though he gave being to, or was the cause of himself, for that implies a contradiction; therefore divines

generally say, that God is in, and of himself, not positively, but negatively, that is, his being and perfections are underived, and not communicated, to him, as all finite perfections are, by him to the creature; therefore he is self-existent, or independent, which is one of the highest glories of the divine nature, by which he is distinguished from all creatures, who live, move, and have their being in and from him.

This attribute of independency belongs to all his perfections; thus his wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, &c. are all independent. And,

1. With respect to his knowledge or wisdom, he doth not receive *Ideas* from any object out of himself, as all intelligent creatures do, and, in that respect, are said to depend on the object; so that if there were not such objects, they could not have the knowledge or *Idea* of them in their minds; therefore the object known must first exist, before we can apprehend what it is. But this must not be said of God's knowledge, for that would be to suppose the things that he knows antecedent to his knowing them. The independency of his knowledge is elegantly described in scripture; *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding*^b?

2. He is independent in power; therefore, as he receives strength from no one, so he doth not act dependently on the will of the creature, *Who hath injoin'd him his way*^c; and accordingly, as he received the power of acting from no one, so none can hinder, turn aside, or controul his power, or put a stop to his methods of acting.

3. He is independent as to his holiness, hating sin necessarily, and not barely depending on some reasons out of himself, which induce him thereunto, for it is essential to the divine nature to be infinitely opposite to all sin, and therefore to be independently holy.

4. He is independent as to his bounty and goodness, and so he communicates blessings not by constraint, but according to his sovereign will. Thus he gave being to the world, and all things therein, which was the first instance of bounty and goodness, and a very great one it

was,

^t Heb. xii. 9. ^u Numb. xvi. 22. ^x 1 Tim. vi. 16. ^y Psal. cxlviii. 5. ^z John iv. 24. ^a Deut. iv. 12, 15, 16. ^b Isai. xl. 13, 14. ^c Job xxxvi. 23.

was, not by constraint, but by his free will, for his pleasure they are and were created. In like manner, whatever instances of mercy he extends to miserable creatures, he still acts independently, in the display thereof; nothing out of himself moves or lays a constraint upon him, but he shews mercy because it is his pleasure so to do.

But, to evince the truth of this doctrine, that God is independent as to his being, and all his perfections, let it be farther consider'd,

(1.) That all things depend on his power, which brought them into, and preserves them in being; therefore they exist by his will, as their creator and preserver, and consequently are not necessary, but dependent beings. If therefore all things depend on God, it is the greatest absurdity to say that God depends on any thing, for this would be to suppose the cause and the effect to be mutually dependent on, and derived from each other, which infers a contradiction.

(2.) If God be infinitely above the highest creatures, he cannot depend on any of them, for dependence argues inferiority. Now that God is above all things is certain: this is represented in a very beautiful manner by the prophet, when he says^a, *Behold the nations are as the drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; all nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity*; therefore he cannot be said to be inferior to them, and, by consequence, to depend on them.

(3.) If God depends on any creature, he does not exist necessarily; and if so, then he might not have been; for the same will, by which he is supposed to exist, might have determined that he should not have existed. If therefore God be not independent, he might not have been, and, according to the same method of reasoning, he might cease to be; for the same will, that gave being to him, might take it away at pleasure, which is altogether inconsistent with the *Idea* of a God.

From God's being independent, or in and of himself, we infer,

1. That we ought to conclude that the creature cannot lay any obligation on him, or do any thing that may tend to make him more happy than he is in himself; the Apostle gives a challenge to this effect, *Who hath first given to him,*

and it shall be recompensed unto him again^c; and Eliphaz says to Job^e, *Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*

2. If Independency be a divine perfection, then let it not, in any instance, or by any consequence, be attributed to the creature; let us conclude, that all our springs are in him, and that all we enjoy and hope for is from him, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and the fountain of all our blessedness.

III. God is infinite in being, glory, blessedness and perfection. To be infinite, is to be without all bounds or limits; either actual or possible: now that God is so, is evident, from his being independent and uncreated; and because his will fixes the bounds of all the excellencies, perfections and powers of the creature. If therefore he doth not exist by the will of another, he is infinite in being, and consequently in all perfection: thus it is said^g, *his understanding is infinite*, which will further appear, when we consider him as omniscient; his will determines what shall come to pass, with an infinite sovereignty, that cannot be controuled, or rendered ineffectual; his power is infinite, and therefore all things are equally possible, and easy to it, nor can it be resisted by any contrary force or power; and he is infinite in blessedness, as being self-sufficient, or not standing in need of any thing to make him more happy than he was in himself, from all eternity. The Psalmist is supposed, by many, to speak in the person of Christ, when he says^h, *My goodness extendeth not to thee*, q. d. "How much soever thy relative glory may be illustrated, by what I have engaged to perform in the covenant of redemption, yet this can make no addition to thine essential glory." And if so, then certainly nothing can be done by us which may in the least contribute thereunto.

IV. God is all-sufficient, by which we understand that he hath enough in himself to satisfy the most enlarged desires of his creatures, and to make them completely blessed. As his self-sufficiency is that whereby he has enough in himself to denominate him completely blessed, as a God of infinite perfection; so his all-sufficiency

^a Isai. xl. 15, 17.

^c Rom. xi. 35.

^e Job xxii. 2, 3.

^g Psal. cxlvii. 5.

^h Psal. xvi. 2.

is that, whereby he is able to communicate as much blessedness to his creatures, as he is pleased to make them capable of receiving; and therefore he is able not only to supply all their wants, but to do exceedingly above all that they ask or thinkⁱ. This he can do, either in an immediate way; or, if he thinks fit to make use of creatures as instruments, to fulfil his pleasure, and communicate what he designs to impart to us, he is never at a loss; for as they are the work of his hands, so he has a right to use them at his will, upon which account, they are said all of them to be his servants^k.

This doctrine of God's all-sufficiency should be improved by us,

1. To induce us to seek happiness in him alone: creatures are no more than the stream, but he is the fountain; we may, in a mediate way, receive some small drops from them, but he is the ocean of all blessedness.

2. Let us take heed that we don't reflect on, or, in effect, deny this perfection, which we may be said to do in various instances. As,

(1.) When we are discontented with our present condition, and desire more than God has allotted for us. This seems to have been the sin of the Angels, who left their first habitation through pride, seeking more than God designed they should have; and this was the sin by which our first parents fell, desiring a greater degree of knowledge than what they thought themselves possessed of: thus they fancied, that by eating the forbidden fruit, they should be as Gods, knowing good and evil^l.

(2.) We practically deny the all-sufficiency of God, when we seek blessings, of what kind soever they are, in an indirect way, as though God were not able to bestow them upon us in his own way, or in the use of lawful means: thus Rebecca and Jacob did, when they contrived a lie to obtain the blessing^m, as though there had not been an all-sufficiency in providence to bring it about, without their having recourse to those methods that were in themselves sinful.

(3.) When we use unlawful means to escape imminent dangers. Thus David did when he feigned himself mad, supposing, without ground, that he should have been slain by Achish king of Gath,

and that there was no other way to escape but thisⁿ: and Abraham and Isaac^o, when they denied their wives, concluding this to have been an expedient to save their lives, as though God were not able to save them in a better and more honourable way.

(4.) When we distrust his providence, though we have had large experience of its appearing for us in various instances: thus David did, when he said, in his heart, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul*^p: and the Israelites, when they said, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness*^q? though he had provided for them in an extraordinary way ever since they had been there: yea, Moses himself was faulty in this matter, when he said, *Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me*^r: and Asa, when he tempted Benhadad to break his league with Baasha, who made war against him, as though God were not able to deliver him without this indirect practice, though he had, in an eminent manner, appeared for him, in giving him a signal victory over Zerah the Ethiopian, when he came against him with an army of a million of men^s: and likewise Joshua, when Israel had suffered a small defeat, occasioned by Achan's sin, when they fled before the men of Ai, though there were but thirty six of them slain; yet, on that occasion, he is ready to wish that God had not brought them over Jordan, and meditates nothing but ruin and destruction from the Amorites, forgetting God's former deliverances, and distrusting his faithfulness, and care of his people, and, as it were, calling in question his all-sufficiency, as though he were not able to accomplish the promises he had made to them^t.

(5.) When we doubt of the truth, or certain accomplishment of his promises, and so are ready to say, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Doth his truth fail for ever?* This we are apt to do, when there are great difficulties in the way of the accomplishment thereof: Thus Sarah, when it was told her that she should have a child in her old age, she laughed, thro' unbelief^u; and God intimates, that this was an affront to his all-sufficiency, when he says, *Is any thing too hard for the Lord*^x? and Gideon, though he was told

ⁱ Phil. iv. 19. and Eph. iii. 20.

^k Psal. cxix. 91.

^l Gen. iii. 5.

^m Chap. xxvii.

ⁿ 1 Sam.

xxi. 13.

^o Gen. Chapters xx. and xxvi.

^p 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

^q Psal. lxxviii. 19.

^r Numb.

xi. 13, 14.

^s 2 Chron. xvi. 3. compared with Chap. xiv. 9, 12.

^t Joshua vii. 7, 8, 9.

^u Gen. xviii. 12.

^x Ver. 14.

that God was with him; and had an express command to go in his might, with a promise that he should deliver *Israel* from the *Midianites*, yet he says, *O Lord, wherewith shall I save them? for my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house*^y. God tells him again, *I will be with thee, and smite the Midianites*^z; yet, afterwards, he desires that he would give him a sign in the wet and dry fleece. What is this but questioning his all-sufficiency?

(6.) When we decline great services, though called to them by God, under pretence of our unfitness for them: thus when the prophet *Jeremiah* was called to deliver the Lord's message to the rebellious house of *Israel*, he desires to be excused, and says, *Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child*; whereas the main discouragement was the difficulty of the work, and the hazards he was like to run; but God encourages him to it, by putting him in mind of his all-sufficiency, when he tells him, that *he would be with him, and deliver him*^a.

3. This divine perfection affords matter of support and encouragement to believers, under the greatest straits and difficulties they are exposed to in this world; and we have many instances in scripture of those who have had recourse to it in the like cases. Thus, when *David* was in the greatest strait that ever he met with, upon the *Amalekites* spoiling of *Ziklag*, and carrying away the women captives, the people talked of stoning him, and all things seemed to make against him; yet it is said, that *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God*^b: so *Mordecai* was confident that the enlargement and deliverance of the Jews should come some other way, if not by *Esther's* intercession for them, when she was afraid to go in to the king^c; and this confidence he could never have obtained, considering the present posture of their affairs, without a due regard to God's all-sufficiency. Moreover, it was this divine perfection that encouraged *Abraham* to obey the difficult command of offering his son; as the Apostle observes, he did this as knowing that *God was able to raise him from the dead*^d: and when believers are under the greatest distress, from the assaults of their spiritual enemies, they have a warrant from God, as the Apostle had, to encourage themselves, that they shall come off victorious, because *his grace is sufficient for them*^e.

V. God is eternal, this respects his duration, to wit, as he was without beginning, as well as shall be without end; or as his duration is unchangeable, or without succession, the same from everlasting to everlasting: thus the Psalmist says, *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God*^f.

1. That God is from everlasting, appears,

(1.) From his being a necessary, self-existent Being, or, as was before observed, in and of himself, therefore he must be from everlasting; for whatever is not produced is from eternity. Now that God did not derive his being from any one, is evident, because he gave being to all things, which is implied in their being creatures; therefore nothing gave being to him, and consequently he was from eternity.

(2.) If he is an infinitely perfect being, as has been observed before, then his duration is infinitely perfect, and consequently it is boundless, that is to say, eternal: it is an imperfection, in all created beings, that they began to exist, and therefore they are said, in a comparative sense, to be but of yesterday; we must therefore, when we conceive of God, separate this imperfection from him and so conclude that he was from all eternity.

(3.) If he created all things in the beginning, then he was before the beginning of time, that is, from eternity: thus 'tis said, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*^g; this is very evident, for time is a successive duration, taking its rise from a certain point, or moment, which we call the beginning: now that duration, which was before this, must be from eternity, unless we suppose time before time began, or, which is all one, that there was a successive duration before successive duration began, which is a contradiction. Therefore, if God fixed that beginning to all things, as their creator, and particularly to time, which is the measure of the duration of all created beings, then 'tis evident he was before time, and consequently from eternity.

(4.) This also appears from scripture; as when it is said, *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*^h: and when we read of his eternal

^y Judges vi. 15.

^z Ver. 16.

^a Jer. i. 6. compared with ver. 8.

^b 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

^c Esth. iv. 14.

^d Heb. xi. 19.

^e 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

^f Psal. xc. 2.

^g Gen. i. 1.

^h Deut. xxxiii. 27.

power and Godheadⁱ; and elsewhere, *Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord, my God^k? Thy throne is established of old; thou art from everlasting^l*; so his attributes and perfections are said to have been from everlasting; *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting^m*.

And this may be argued from many scripture-consequences: thus there was an election of persons to holiness and happiness, *before the foundation of the worldⁿ*; and Christ, in particular, *was fore-ordained to be our mediator before the foundation of the world^o*; and *set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was^p*. From hence it follows, that there was a sovereign will that fore-ordained it, and therefore God, whose decree or purpose it was, existed before the foundation of the world, that is, from everlasting.

Moreover, there were grants of grace given in Christ, or put into his hand, from all eternity: thus we read of *eternal life, which God promised before the world began^q*; and of our being *saved, according to his purpose and grace, given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began^r*. It hence follows, that there was an eternal giver, and consequently that God was from everlasting.

2. God shall be to everlasting; thus 'tis said, *The Lord shall endure for ever^s*; and that he *liveth for ever and ever^t*; and that his *years shall have no end^u*; and *the Lord shall reign for ever^v*, therefore he must endure for ever. Again, 'tis said, that *the Lord keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, to a thousand generations^w*; and *he will ever be mindful of his covenant^x*, that is, will fulfil what he has promised therein: if his truth shall not fail for ever, then he, who will accomplish what he has spoken, must endure to everlasting.

But this may be farther evinced from the perfections of his nature.

(1.) From his necessary existence, which not only argues, as has been before observed, that he could not begin to be, but equally proves, that he cannot cease to be, or that he shall be to everlasting.

(2.) He is void of all composition, and therefore must be to everlasting; none but compounded beings, viz. such as have parts, are subject to dissolution, which arises from the contrariety of these parts, and their tendency to destroy one

another, which occasions the dissolution of the whole; but God having no parts, as he is the most simple uncompounded being, there can be nothing in him that tends to dissolution, therefore he can never have an end from any necessity of nature. And,

(3.) He must be to eternity, because there is no one superior to him, at whose will he exists, that can deprive him of his being and glory.

(4.) He cannot will his own destruction, or non-existence, for that is contrary to the universal nature of things; since no being can desire to be less perfect than it is, much less can any one will or desire his own annihilation; especially no one, who is possessed of blessedness, can will the loss thereof, for that is incongruous with the nature of it, as being a desirable good, therefore God cannot will the loss of his own blessedness; and since his blessedness is inseparably connected with his being, he cannot cease to be, from an act of his own will: if therefore he cannot cease to be, from any necessity of nature, or from the will of another, or from an act of his own will, he must be to eternity.

Moreover, the eternity of God may be proved from his other perfections, since one of the divine perfections infers the other. As,

1. From his immutability; he is unchangeable in his being, therefore he is so in all his perfections, and consequently must be always the same, from everlasting to everlasting, and not proceed from a state of non-existence to that of being, which he would have done, had he not been from everlasting, nor decline from a state of being to that of non-existence, which he would be supposed to do, were he not to everlasting: either of these is the greatest change that can be supposed, and therefore inconsistent with the divine immutability.

2. He is the first cause, and the ultimate end of all things, therefore he must be from eternity, and remain the fountain of all blessedness to eternity.

3. He could not be almighty, or infinite in power, if he were not eternal, for that being, which did not always exist, once could not act, to wit, when it did not exist; or he that may cease to be, may, for the same reason, be disabled from acting; both which are inconsistent with Almighty power.

ⁱ Rom. i. 20.

^p Prov. viii. 25.

^x Psal. cxlvi. 10.

^k Habbak. i. 12.

^q Tit. i. 2.

^y Deut. vii. 9.

^l Psal. xciii. 2.

^r 2 Tim. i. 9.

^z Psal. cxi. 5.

^m Psal. ciii. 17.

^f Psal. ix. 7.

ⁿ Eph. i. 4.

^t Rev. iv. 9, 10.

^o 1 Pet. i. 20.

^u Psal. cii. 27.

4. If he were not eternal, he could not, by way of eminence, be called *the living God*, as he is^a; or said *to have life in himself*^b; for both these expressions imply his necessary existence, and that argues his eternity.

3. God's eternal duration is without succession, as well as without beginning and end; that it is so, appears,

(1.) Because, as was hinted but now, it is unchangeable, since all successive duration infers a change. Thus the duration of creatures, which is successive, is not the same one moment as it will be the next; every moment adds something to it; now this cannot be said of God's duration. Besides, successive duration implies a being, what we were not, in all respects before, and a ceasing to be what we were, and so it is a kind of continual passing from not being to being, which is inconsistent with the divine perfections, and, in particular, with his unchangeable duration. The Psalmist, speaking of God's eternal duration, expresses it by the immutability thereof, *Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end*^c; and the Apostle, speaking concerning this matter, says, *He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*^d.

(2.) Successive duration is applicable to time; and the duration of all creatures is measured, and therefore cannot be termed infinite; it is measured by its successive parts: thus a day, a year, an age, a million of ages, are measured by the number of moments, of which they consist; but God's duration is unmeasured, that is, infinite, therefore it is without succession, or without those parts of which time consists.

4. Eternity is an attribute peculiar to God, and therefore we call it an incommunicable perfection. There are, indeed, other things that shall endure to everlasting, as angels, and the souls of men; as also those heavenly bodies that shall remain after the creature is deliver'd from the bondage of corruption, to which it is now subject: the heavenly places, designed for the seat of the blessed, as well as their happy inhabitants, shall be everlasting; but yet the everlasting duration of these things infinitely differs from the eternity of God; for as all finite things began to be, and their duration is successive, so their everlasting existence depends entirely on the power and will of God, and therefore cannot be called necessary,

or independent, as his eternal existence is.

Object. Since the various parts of time, as days, years, &c. and the various changes, or flux of time; such as past, present, and to come, are sometimes attributed to God: this seems inconsistent with the account that has been given of his eternity.

Answer. 'Tis true, we often find such expressions used in scripture: thus he is called, the ancient of days^e; and his eternity is expressed, by *his years having no end*^f; and 'tis said, *He was, is, and is to come*^g. But, for the understanding of such-like expressions, we must consider, that herein God is pleased to speak according to our weak capacity, who cannot comprehend the manner of his infinite duration: we cannot conceive of any duration but that which is successive; therefore God speaks to us, as he does in many other instances, in condescension to our capacities; but yet we may observe, that though he thus condescends to speak concerning himself, yet there is oftentimes something added, which distinguishes his duration from that of creatures; as when 'tis said, *Behold God is great, and we know him not; neither can the number of his years be searched out*^h; so that though we read of the years of his duration, yet they are such as are unsearchable, or incomprehensible years, infinitely differing from years, as applied to created beings; and 'tis said, *A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past*ⁱ. *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*^k; and, by the same method of reasoning, it may be said one moment is with the Lord as a thousand millions of ages, or a thousand millions of ages as one moment; such is his duration, and therefore not properly successive, like that of creatures.

2. When any thing past, present, or to come, is attributed to God, it either signifies that he is so, as to his works, which are finite, and measured by successive duration; or else it signifies, that he, whose duration is not measured by succession, notwithstanding, exists unchangeably, through all the various ages of time. As he is omnipresent with all the parts of matter, yet has no parts himself, so he exists in all the successive ages of time, but without that succession, which is peculiar to time and creatures.

^a Jer. x. 10.
cii. 27.

^b John v. 26.

^c Psal. cii. 27.

^d Heb. xiii. 8.

^e Dan. vii. 9.

^f Psal.

^g Rev. i. 4. and Chap. iv. 8.

^h Job xxxvi. 26.

ⁱ Psal. xc. 4.

^k 2 Pet. iii. 8.

Several things may be infer'd, of a practical nature, from the eternity of God. As,

1. Since God's duration is eternal, that is, without succession, so that there is no such thing as past, or to come, with him; or if ten thousand millions of ages are but like a moment to him, then it follows, that those sins which we have committed long ago, and perhaps are forgotten by us, are present to his view; he knows what we have done against him ever since we had a being in this world, as much as though we were at present committing them.

2. If God was from eternity, then how contemptible is all created glory, when compared with his; look but a few ages backward, and it was nothing: this should humble the pride of the creature, who is but of yesterday, and whose duration is nothing, and less than nothing, if compared with God's.

3. The eternity of God, as being to everlasting, affords matter of terror to his enemies, and comfort to his people, and, as such, should be improved for the preventing of sin.

(1.) It affords matter of terror to his enemies. For,

1st. He ever lives to see his threatnings executed, and to pour forth the vials of his fury on them: thus the prophet, speaking of God, as *the everlasting king*, adds, that *at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation*¹. Therefore the eternity of God argues the eternity of the punishment of sin, since this great Judge, who is a consuming fire to impenitent sinners, will live for ever to see his threatnings executed upon them. This appears, if we consider,

2^{dly}. That since he is eternal in his being, he must be so in his power, holiness, justice, and all his other perfections, which are terrible to his enemies: thus the Psalmist says, *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath*^m; and the Apostle says, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*ⁿ.

(2.) It affords matter of comfort to believers, as opposed to the fluctuating and uncertain state of all creature-enjoyments; 'tis an encouragement to them in the loss of friends and relations, or under all the other losses or disappointments they meet with as to their outward estate in this

world. These are, at best, but short-liv'd comforts, but God is the *eternal portion* and happiness of his people^o; and, from his eternity, they may certainly conclude, that the happiness of the heavenly state will be eternal, for it consists in the enjoyment of him, who is so; which is a very delightful thought to all who are enabled by faith to lay claim to it.

VI. God is immutable: thus 'tis said, that *with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*^p. This is sometimes set forth in a metaphorical way, in which respect he is compared to a *rock*^q. which remains immoveable, when the whole ocean, that surrounds it, is continually in a fluctuating state, even so, though all creatures are subject to change, God alone is unchangeable in his being, and all his perfections.

Here we shall consider,

1. How immutability is a perfection; and how it is a divine perfection peculiar to God.

(1.) It must be allowed that immutability cannot be said to be an excellency or perfection, unless it be applied to, or spoken of what is good; an immutable state of sin, or misery, is far from being an excellency, when 'tis applied to fallen Angels, or wicked men: but unchangeable holiness, and happiness, as applied to holy Angels, or Saints in heaven, is a perfection conferred upon them; and when we speak of God's immutability, we suppose him infinitely blessed, which is included in the notion of a God; and so we farther say, that he is unchangeable in all those perfections in which it consists.

(2.) Immutability belongs, in the most proper sense, to God alone; so that *as he only is said to have immortality*^r, that is, such as is underived and independent, he alone is unchangeable; other things are render'd immutable by an act of his will and power, but immutability is an essential perfection of the divine nature; creatures are dependently immutable, God is independently so.

(3.) The most perfect creatures, such as Angels and glorified Saints, are capable of new additions to their blessedness; new objects may be presented as occasions of praise, which tend perpetually to increase their happiness: the Angels know more than they did before Christ's incarnation; for they are said to know *by the church*, that is, by the dealings of God

¹ Jer. x. 10.
xxxii. 4.

^m Psal. xc. 11.
^r 1 Tim. vi. 16.

ⁿ Heb. x. 31.

^o Psal. lxxiii. 26.

^p James i. 17.

^q Deut.

with his church, *the manifold wisdom of God*^f; and to *desire to look into* the account the gospel gives of the *sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*^g; and they shall have farther additions to their blessedness, when all the elect are joined to their assembly in the great day, so that the happiness of the best creatures is communicated in various degrees; but God's perfections and blessedness can have no additions made to them, therefore he is immutable in such a sense as no creature is.

2. We shall now prove that God is immutable in his being and all his perfections.

(1.) That he is immutable in his being; this belongs to him as God, and consequently to him alone. All other beings once were not; there has been, if I may so express it, a change from a state of non-existence, to that of being; and the same power that brought them into being, could reduce them again to their first nothing. To be dependent, is to be subject to change at the will of another; this is applicable to all finite things; for it is said, *As a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed*: But God being opposed to them as independent, is said to be *the same*^h.

1st. He did not change from a state of non-existence to being, inasmuch as he was from everlasting, and therefore necessarily existent; and consequently he cannot change from a state of being to that of non-existence, or cease to be; and because his perfections are essential to him, and underived, in the same sense as his being is, therefore there can be no change therein.

2^{dly}. He cannot change from a state of greater to a state of less perfection, or be subject to the least diminution of his divine perfections. To suppose this possible, is to suppose he may cease to be infinitely perfect, that is, to be God: nor can he change from a state of less perfection to a state of greater, for that is to suppose him not to be infinitely perfect before this change, or that there are degrees of infinite perfection. Nor,

3^{dly}. Can he pass from that state, in which he is, to another of equal perfection; for, as such a change implies an equal proportion of loss and gain, so it would argue a plurality of infinite beings; or since he, who was God before this change, was distinct from what he arrives

to after it, this would be contrary to the unity of the divine essence.

Moreover, this may be farther proved from hence, that if there be any change in God, this must arise either from himself, or some other: it cannot be from himself, inasmuch as he exists necessarily, and not as the result of his own will, therefore he cannot will any alteration, or change in himself; this is also contrary to the nature of infinite blessedness, which cannot desire the least diminution, as it cannot apprehend any necessity thereof: and then he cannot be changed by any other; for he that changes any other, must be greater than him whom he changes; nor can he be subject to the will of another, who is superior to him; since there is none equal, much less superior, to God, therefore there is no being, that can add to, or take from his perfections, which leads us,

(2). To consider the immutability of God's perfections. And,

First, Of his knowledge; he seeth not as man seeth, this is obvious. For,

1st. His knowledge is independent upon the objects known, therefore whatever changes there are in them, there is none in him. Things known are considered, either as past, present, or to come; and these are not known by us in the same way; for concerning things past, it must be said, that we once knew them; or of things to come, that we shall know them hereafter; whereas God, with one view, comprehends all things past and future, as though they were present.

2^{dly}. If God's knowledge were not unchangeable, he might be said to have different thoughts, or apprehensions of things, at one time, from what he has at another, which would argue a defect of wisdom. And indeed a change of sentiments implies ignorance, or weakness of understanding; for to make advances in knowledge, supposes a degree of ignorance, and to decline therein, is to be reduced to a state of ignorance: now it is certain, that both these are inconsistent with the infinite perfection of the divine mind; nor can any such defect be applied to him, who is called, *The only wise God*ⁱ.

3^{dly}. If it were possible for God's knowledge to be changed, this would infer a change of his will, since having changed his sentiments, he must be supposed to alter his resolutions and purposes; but

^f Eph. iii. 10.

^g 1 Pet. i. 11, 12.

^h Psa. cii. 26, 27.

ⁱ 1 Tim. i. 17.

his will is unchangeable, therefore his understanding or knowledge is so, which leads us to prove,

Secondly, That God is unchangeable in his will: thus it is said of him, *He is in one mind, and who can turn him?*^y This is agreeable to his infinite perfection, and therefore he does not purpose to do a thing at one time, and determine not to do it at another; though, 'tis true, the revelation of his will may be changed, whereby that may be render'd a duty at one time, which was not at another: thus the ordinances of the ceremonial law were prescribed, from *Moses's* time to *Christ's*, but, after that, were abolished, and ceased to be ordinances; so that there may be a change in the things willed, or in the external revelation of God's will, and in our duty founded thereon, when there is, at the same time, no change in his purpose, for he determines all changes in the external dispensation of his providence and grace, without the least shadow of change in his own will: this may farther appear, if we consider,

1st. That if the will of God were not unchangeable, he could not be the object of trust, for how could we depend on his promises, were it possible for him to change his purpose? Neither would his threatnings be so much regarded, if there were any ground to expect, from the mutability of his nature, that he would not execute them; and, by this means, all religion would be banished out of the world.

2^{dly}. This would render the condition of the best men, in some respects, very uncomfortable, for they might be one day the object of his love, and the next of his hatred, and those blessings which accompany salvation might be bestowed at one time, and taken away at another, which is directly contrary to scripture, which asserts, that *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*^z.

3^{dly}. None of those things, that occasion a change in the purposes of men, can be applied to God, and therefore there is nothing in him that, in the least degree, can lead him to change his will, or determination; with respect to the event of things. For,

1st. Men change their purpose, from a natural fickleness and inconstancy, as there is mutability in their very nature; but God being unchangeable in his nature, he must be so in his purpose or will.

2^{dly}. Men change their purposes in promising, and not fulfilling their promise, or, as we say, in being worse than their word, oftentimes from the viciousness and depravity of their nature; but God is infinitely holy, and therefore, in this respect, cannot change.

3^{dly}. Men change their mind, or purpose, for want of power, to bring about what they designed; this has hinder'd many well concerted projects from taking effect, in some, and many threatnings from being executed in others; but God's will cannot be frustrated for want of power to do what he designed, inasmuch as he is Almighty.

4^{thly}. Men change their minds, many times, for want of foresight; something unexpected occurs that renders it expedient for them to alter their purpose, which argues a defect of wisdom; but God is infinitely wise, therefore nothing unforeseen can intervene to induce him to change his purpose.

5^{thly}. Men are sometimes obliged to change their purpose by the influence, threatnings, or other methods, used by some superior; but there is none equal, much less superior, to God, and consequently none can lay any obligation on him to change his purpose.

VII. God is incomprehensible: this implies that his perfections cannot be fully known by any creature; thus 'tis said, *Can'st thou, by searching, find out God? Can'st thou find out the Almighty unto perfection*^a?

When we consider God as incomprehensible, we don't only mean that man, in this imperfect state, cannot fully comprehend his glory; for 'tis but very little, comparatively, that we can comprehend of finite things, and we know much less of that which is infinite; but when we say that God is incomprehensible, we mean, that the best of creatures, in the most perfect state, cannot fully conceive of, or describe his glory; and the reason is, because they are finite, and his perfections are infinite; and there is no proportion between an infinite God and a finite mind: the water of the ocean might as well be contained in the hollow of the hand, or the dust of the earth weighed in a ballance, as that the best of creatures should have a perfect and adequate *Idea* of the divine perfections. In this case we generally distinguish between apprehending, and comprehending; the former

^y Job xxiii. 13.

^z Rom. xi. 29.

^a Job xi. 7.

I

denotes

denotes our having some imperfect, or inadequate *Ideas* of what surpasses our understanding; the latter, our knowing every thing that is contained in it, which is called our having an adequate *Idea* thereof: now we apprehend something of the divine perfections, in proportion to the limits of our capacities, and our present state; but we cannot, nor ever shall, be able to comprehend the divine glory, since God is incomprehensible to every one but himself. Again, we farther distinguish between our having a full conviction that God hath those infinite perfections, which no creature can comprehend, and our being able fully to describe them: thus we firmly believe that God exists throughout all the changes of time, and yet that his duration is not measured thereby, or that he fills all places without being co-extended with matter; we apprehend, as having an undeniable demonstration thereof, that he does so, though we cannot comprehend how he does it.

VIII. God is omnipresent: this is elegantly set forth by the Psalmist, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me*^b. This perfection of the Godhead doth not consist merely, as some suppose, in his knowing what is done in heaven and earth, which is only a metaphorical sense of omnipresence; as when *Elisha* tells *Gebazi*, *Went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee*^c? Or, as the Apostle says to the church at *Corinth*, that tho' he was *absent in body*, yet he was *present with them in spirit*^d; or, as we say, that our souls are with our friends in distant places, as often as we think of them: nor doth it consist in God's being omnipresent by his authority, as a king is said, by a figurative way of speaking, to be present in all parts of his dominions, where persons are deputed to act under him, or by his authority: but we must take it in a proper sense, as he *fills all places* with his presence^e; so that he is not confined to, or excluded from any place; and this he does, not by parts, as the world or the universe is said to be

omnipresent, for that is only agreeable to things corporeal, and compounded of parts, and therefore by no means applicable to the divine omnipresence. This is a doctrine which it is impossible for us to comprehend, yet we are bound to believe it, because the contrary hereunto is inconsistent with infinite perfection; and it is sometimes called his essential presence, to distinguish it from his influential presence, whereby he is said to be where he acts in the methods of his providence, which is either common or special; by the former of these he upholds and governs all things; by the latter he exerts his power in a way of grace, which is called his special presence with his people: and as his omnipresence, or immensity, is necessary, and not the result of his will, so his influential presence is arbitrary, and an instance of infinite condescension, in which respect he is said to be, or not to be, in particular places, to come to, or depart, from his people, sometimes to dwell in heaven, as he displays his glory there agreeably to the heavenly state; at other times to dwell with his church on earth, when he communicates to them those blessings which they stand in need of; which leads us to consider the next divine perfection mention'd in this answer.

IX. God is almighty^f; this will evidently appear, in that if he be infinite in all his other perfections; he must be so in power: thus if he be omniscient, he knows what is possible or expedient to be done, and, if he be an infinite sovereign, he wills whatever shall come to pass: now this knowledge would be insignificant, and his will inefficacious, were he not infinite in power or almighty. Again, this might be argued from his justice, either in rewarding or punishing; for if he were not infinite in power, he could do neither of these, at least so far as to render him the object of that desire, or fear, which is agreeable to the nature of these perfections; neither could infinite faithfulness accomplish all the promises which he hath made, so as to excite that trust and dependence, which is a part of religious worship; nor could he say, without limitation, as he does, *I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it*^g.

But since power is visible in, and demonstrated by its effects, and infinite power,

^b Psal. cxxxix. 7—10.
Chap. iv. 8.

^c 2 Kings v. 26.

^e Isa. xlv. 11.

^d 1 Cor. v. 3.

^f Jer. xxiii. 24.

^g Rev. i. 8.

by those effects which cannot be produced by a creature, we may observe the almighty power of God in all his works, both of nature and grace: thus his *eternal power* is understood, as the Apostle says, *By the things that are made*^f; not that there was an eternal production of things, but the exerting this power in time proves it to be infinite and truly divine; for no creature can produce the smallest particle of matter out of nothing, much less furnish the various species of creatures with those endowments, in which they excel one another, and set forth their Creator's glory. And the glory of his power is no less visible in the works of providence, whereby he upholds all things, disposes of them according to his pleasure, and brings about events, which only he who has an Almighty arm can effect. These things might have been enlarged on, as evident proofs of this divine perfection; but since the works of creation and providence will be particularly considered in their proper place^g, we shall proceed to consider the power of God, as appearing in his works of grace; particularly,

1. In some things subservient to our redemption, as in the formation of the human nature of Christ, which is ascribed to the *power of the highest*^h, and in preserving it from being crushed, overcome, and trampled on, by all the united powers of hell and earth: 'tis said, *the arm of God strengthen'd him*, so that *the enemy should not exact upon him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him*ⁱ. It was the power of God that bore him up under all the terrible views he had of sufferings and death, which had many ingredients in it, that render'd it, beyond expression, formidable, and would have sunk a meer creature, unassisted thereby, into destruction: it was by the divine power, which he calls *the finger of God*^k, that he cast out devils, and wrought many other miracles, to confirm his mission; so when he *rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child*, 'tis said, *they were all amazed at the mighty power of God*^l: and it was hereby that *he was raised from the dead*, which the Apostle calls the *exceeding greatness of the power of God*^m; and accordingly he was *declared to be the Son of God, with power*, by this extraordinary eventⁿ. Moreover, the power of God will be glorified, in the highest degree, in his second coming,

when, as he says, he will appear in *the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*^o.

2. The power of God eminently appears in the propagation and success of the gospel.

(1.) In the propagation thereof; that a doctrine, so contrary to the corrupt inclinations of mankind, which had so little to recommend it, but what was divine, should be spread throughout the greatest part of the known world, by a small number of men, raised up, and spirited to that end, and, in order thereunto, acted above themselves, and furnished with extraordinary qualifications, such as the gift of tongues, and a power to work miracles, is a convincing proof that the power, by which all this was done, is infinite. It was hereby that they were not only inspired with wisdom, by which they silenced and confounded their malicious enemies, but perswaded others to believe what they were sent to impart to them. It was hereby that they were inflamed with zeal, in proportion to the greatness of the occasion, fortified with courage to despise the threats, and patiently to bear the persecuting rage of those who pursued them unto bonds and death. It was hereby that they were enabled to finish their course with joy, and seal the doctrines they delivered with their blood. And the power of God was herein the more remarkable, inasmuch as they were not men of the greatest natural sagacity, or resolution; and they always confess'd, that whatever there was extraordinary in the course of their ministry, was from the hand of God.

(2.) The power of God appears in the success of the gospel, the report whereof would never have been believed, had not *the arm of the Lord been revealed*^p. The great multitude that was converted to Christianity in one age, is an eminent instance hereof; and the rather, because the profession they made was contrary to their secular interests, and exposed them to the same persecution, though in a less degree, which the Apostles themselves met with; notwithstanding which, they willingly parted with their worldly substance, when the necessity of affairs required it, and were content to have all things common, that so the work might proceed with more success. It was the power of God that touched their hearts;

^f Rom. i. 20.

^g Chap. ix. 42, 43.

^h Quest. xv. and xviii.

ⁱ Eph. i. 19.

^j Luke i. 35.

^k Rom. i. 4.

^l Psal. lxxxix. 21, 22.

^m Matt. xxiv. 30.

ⁿ Luke xi. 20.

^o Isai. liii. 1.

so that this internal influence contributed more to the work of grace, than all the rhetorick of man could have done. It was this that carried them through all the opposition of cruel mockings, bonds, and imprisonment, and, at the same time, compensated all their losses and sufferings, by those extraordinary joys and supports which they had, both in life and death.

And to this we may add, that the daily success of the gospel, in all the instances of converting grace, is an evident effect and proof of the divine power, as will farther appear, when, under a following head, we consider effectual calling, as being the work of God's almighty power and grace^a.

Object. It will be objected, that there are some things which God cannot do, and therefore he is not almighty.

Answer. 'Tis true, there are some things that God cannot do; but the reason is, either because it would be contrary to his divine perfections to do them, or they are not the objects of power; therefore it is not an imperfection in him that he cannot do them, but rather a branch of his glory. As,

1. There are some things which he cannot do, not because he has not power to do them, had he pleased, but the only reason is, because he has willed or determined not to do them. Thus if we should say, that he cannot make more worlds, it is not for want of infinite power, but because we suppose he has determined not to make them: he cannot save the reprobate, or fallen Angels, not through a defect of power, but because he has willed not to do it. In this the power of God is distinguished from that of the creature; for we never say that a person cannot do a thing, merely because he will not, but because he wants power, if he would: but this is by no means to be said of God in any instance. Therefore we must distinguish between his absolute and ordinate power; by the former he could do many things, which by the latter he will not, and consequently to say he cannot do those things, which he has determined not to do, does not in the least overthrow this attribute of almighty power.

2. He cannot do that which is contrary to the nature of things, where there is an impossibility in the things themselves to be done: thus he cannot make a creature to be independent, for that is contrary to the *Idea* of a creature;

nor can he make a creature equal to himself, for then it would not be a creature; it is also impossible that he should make a creature to be, and not to be, at the same time, or render that not done, which is done, since that is contrary to the nature and truth of things; to which we may add, that he cannot make a creature the object of religious worship, or, by his power, advance him to such a dignity, as shall warrant any ones ascribing divine perfections to him.

3. He cannot deny himself, *It is impossible for God to lye*^r, and 'tis equally impossible for him to act contrary to any of his perfections; for which reason he cannot do any thing that argues weakness: as, for instance, he cannot repent, or change his mind, or eternal purpose; nor can he do any thing that would argue him not to be a holy God: now, though it may be truly said that God can do none of these things, this is no defect in him, but rather a glory, since they are not the objects of power, but would argue weakness and imperfection in him, should he do them.

We shall now consider what practical improvement we ought to make of this divine attribute.

(1.) The almighty power of God affords great support and relief to believers, when they are assaulted, and afraid of being overcome, by their spiritual enemies: thus when they *wrestle*, as the Apostle says, not only *against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places*^s. And when they consider what numbers have been overcome and ruined by them, and are discouraged very much, under a sense of their own weakness or inability, to maintain their ground against them; let them consider that God is able to bruise Satan under their feet, and to make them more than conquerors, and to cause all grace to abound in them, and to work in them that which is pleasing in his sight.

(2.) The consideration of God's almighty power, gives us the greatest ground to conclude, that whatever difficulties seem to lie in the way of the accomplishment of his promises, relating to our future blessedness, shall be removed or surmounted; so that those things, which seem impossible, if we look no farther than second causes, or the little appearance there is, at present, of their being brought about, are not only possi-

^a Quest. lxxvii.

^r Heb. vi. 18.

^s Eph. vi. 12.

ble, but very easy for the power of God to effect.

Thus, with respect to what concerns the case of those who are sinking into despair, under a sense of the guilt or power of sin, by reason whereof they are ready to conclude that this burden is so great, that no finite power can remove it, let such consider that to God all things are possible; he can, by his powerful word, raise the most dejected spirits, and turn the shadow of death into a bright morning of peace and joy.

Moreover, if we consider the declining state of religion in the world, the apostacy of some professors, the degeneracy of others, and what reason the best of them have to say, that it is not with them as in times past; or when we consider what little hope there is, from the present view we have of things, that the work of God will be revived in his church; yea, if the state thereof were, in all appearance, as hopeless as it was when God, in a vision, represented it to the prophet *Ezekiel*, when he shewed him the valley full of dry bones, and asked him, *Can these bones live?* or if the question be put; can the despised, declining, sinking and dying interest of Christ be revived? or how can those prophecies, that relate to the churches future happiness and glory, ever have their accomplishment in this world, when all things seem to make against it? this difficulty will be removed, and our hope encouraged, when we consider the power of God, to which nothing is difficult, much less insuperable.

And to this we may add, that the power of God will remove all the difficulties that lie in our way, with respect to the resurrection of the dead: this is a doctrine which seems contrary to the course of nature; and, if we look no farther than the power of the creature, we should be inclined to say, How can this be? But when we consider the almighty power of God, that will sufficiently remove all objections that can be brought against it: thus, when our Saviour proves this doctrine, he opposes the absurd notions which some had relating thereunto, by saying, *Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God* ^u.

(3.) Let us have a due regard to this attribute, and take encouragement from it, when we are engaging in holy duties,

and are sensible of our inability to perform them in a right manner, and have too much reason to complain of an unbecoming frame of spirit therein, of the hardness and impenitency of our hearts, the obstinacy and perverseness of our wills, the earthliness and carnality of our affections, and that all the endeavours we can use to bring our selves into a better frame, have not their desired success; let us encourage our selves with this consideration, that God can make us *willing in the day of his power* ^x; and *do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think* ^y.

(4.) Let us take heed that we do not abuse, or practically deny, or cast contempt on this divine perfection, by presuming that we can obtain spiritual blessings, without dependence on him for them, or expecting divine influences, while we continue in the neglect of his instituted means of grace: it is true, God can work without means, but he has not given us ground to expect that he will do so; therefore when we seek help from him, it must be in his own way.

Again, let us take heed that we do not abuse this divine perfection, by a distrust of God, or by dependence on an arm of flesh; let us not, on the one hand, limit the Holy One of *Israel*, by saying, *Can God do this or that for me, either with respect to spiritual or temporal concerns? nor, on the other hand, rest in any thing short of him, as though omnipotency were not an attribute peculiar to himself. As he is able to do great things for us that we looked not for; so he is much displeased when we expect these blessings from any one short of himself; Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man, that shall die, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth?* ^z

X. God knows all things: it has been before considered, that his being a Spirit, implies his having an understanding, as a Spirit is an intelligent being; therefore his being an infinite Spirit, must argue that *his understanding is infinite* ^a.

This may be farther proved,

1. From his having given being to all things at first, and continually upholding them; he must necessarily know his own workmanship, the effects of his power; and this is yet more evident, if we confi-

^u Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

^v Matt. xxii. 29.

^x Psal. cx. 3.

^y Eph. iii. 20.

^z Mai. li. 12.

^a Psal. cxlviii. 5.

der the creation of all things, as a work of infinite wisdom, which is plainly discernable therein, as well as almighty power; therefore he must know all things, for wisdom supposes knowledge. Moreover, his being the proprietor of all things, results from his having created them, and certainly he must know his own.

2. This farther appears, from his governing all things, or his ordering the subserviency thereof, to answer some valuable ends, and that all should redound to his glory, therefore both the ends and means must be known by him. And as for the governing of intelligent creatures, this supposes knowledge: as the Judge of all, he must be able to discern the cause, or else he cannot determine it, and perfectly to know the rules of justice, or else he cannot exercise it in the government of the world.

3. If God knows himself, he must know all other things, for he that knows the greatest object, must know things of a lesser nature; besides, if he knows himself, he knows what he can do, will do, or has done, which is as much as to say that he knows all things. And that God knows himself, must be granted; for if it be the privilege of an intelligent creature to know himself, though this knowledge in him be but imperfect, surely God must know himself; and because his knowledge can't have any defect, which would be inconsistent with infinite perfection, therefore he must have a perfect, that is to say, an infinite knowledge of himself, and consequently of all other things.

This knowledge of God, which has the creature for its object, is distinguished, in scripture, into his comprehending, seeing, or having a perfect intuition of all things, and his approving of things; or 'tis either intuitive or approbative; the former of these is what we principally understand by this attribute; as when it is said, *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world^b*; and *thou knowest my down-sitting and up-rising, and art acquainted with all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether^c*; and *the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts^d*. And as for the other sense of God's knowledge, to wit, of approbation, which is less properly

called knowledge, because it is rather seated in the will than in the understanding: of this we read in several scriptures; as when God tells *Moses, I know thee by name^e*, which is explained by the following words, *And thou hast found grace in my sight*; so when our Saviour says, concerning his enemies, *I will profess unto you I never knew you^f*, it is not meant of a knowledge of intuition, but approbation. In the former sense, he knows all things, bad as well as good, that which he hates and will punish, as well as what he delights in; in the latter, he only knows that which is good, or agreeable to his will.

Moreover, God is said to know what he can do, and what he has done, or will do.

(1.) God knows what he can do, even many things that he will not do; for as his power is unlimited, so that he can do infinitely more than he will, so he knows more than he will do. This is very obvious; for we our selves, as free agents, can do more than we will, and, as intelligent, we know in many instances, what we can do, though we will never do them; much more must this be said of the great God, who *calleth things that be not as though they were^g*; so *David* enquires of God, *Will Saul come down? and will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand?* And God answers him, *He will come down, and the men of Keilah will deliver thee up^h*; which implies, that God knew what they would have done, had not his providence prevented it. In this respect, things known by him are said to be possible, by reason of his power, whereas the future existence thereof depends on his will.

(2.) God knows whatever he has done, does, or will do, viz. things past, present, or to come. That he knows all things present, has been proved, from the dependence of things on his providence; and his knowledge being inseparably connected with his power: and that he knows all things that are past, is no less evident, for they were once present, and consequently known by him; and to suppose that he does not know them, is to charge him with forgetfulness, or to suppose that his knowledge at present is less perfect than it was, which is inconsistent with infinite perfection. Moreover, if God did not know all things past, he could not be the Judge of the world;

^b Acts xv. 18.

^c Rom. iv. 17.

^d Psal. cxxxix. 2, 3, 4.

^e 1 Sam. xxiii. 12.

^f 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

^g Exod. xxxiii. 12.

^h Matt. vii. 23.

and particularly, he could neither reward nor punish; both which acts respect only things that are past; therefore such things are perfectly known by him. Thus, when *Job* considered his present afflictions, as the punishment of past sins, he says ¹, *My transgression is sealed up in a bag; thou sewest up mine iniquity*, which metaphorical way of speaking, implies his remembering it; so when God threatens to punish his adversaries for their iniquity, he speaks of it, as remembered by him, *laid up in store* with him, and *sealed up among his treasures* ^k; so, on the other hand, when he design'd to reward, or encourage, the religious duties, performed by his people, who feared his name, it is said, *a book of remembrance was written before him, for them* ^l.

But that which we shall principally consider is, God's knowing all things future, *viz.* not only such as are the effects of necessary causes, where the effect is known in or by the cause, but such as are contingent, with respect to us, which is the most difficult of all knowledge whatsoever, and argues it to be truly divine.

By future contingencies, we understand things that are accidental, or, as we commonly say, happen by chance, without any fore-thought, or design of men. Now that many things happen so, with respect to us, and therefore we can't certainly fore-know them, is very obvious; but even these are fore-known by God. For,

1. Things that happen without our design, or fore-thought, and therefore are not certainly fore-known by us, are the objects of his providence, and therefore known unto him from the beginning: thus *the fall of a sparrow to the ground* is a casual thing, yet our Saviour says, that this is not without his providence ^m. Therefore,

2. That which is casual, or accidental to us, is not so to him; so that though we cannot have a certain or determinate fore-knowledge thereof, it does not follow that he has not; since,

3. He has foretold many such future events, as appears by the following instances.

(1.) *Abab's* death by an arrow, shot at random, may be reckoned a contingent event; yet this was foretold before he went into the battle ⁿ, and accomplished accordingly.

(2.) That *Israel* should be afflicted and oppressed in *Egypt*, and afterwards should be delivered, was foretold *four hundred years* before it came to pass ^o. And when *Moses* was sent to deliver them out of the *Egyptian* bondage, God tells him, before-hand, how obstinate *Pharaoh* would be, and with how much difficulty he would be brought to let them go ^p.

(3.) *Joseph's* advancement in *Egypt* was a contingent and very unlikely event, yet it was made known several years before, by his prophetick dream ^q; and afterwards, that which tended more immediately to it, was his foretelling what happened to the chief butler and baker, and the seven years of plenty and famine in *Egypt*, signified by *Pharaoh's* dream, all which were contingent events, and were foretold by divine inspiration, and therefore fore-known by God.

(4.) *Hazael's* coming to the crown of *Syria*, and the cruelty that he would exercise, was foretold to him, when he thought he could never be such a monster of a man, as he afterwards appeared to be ^r.

(5.) *Judas's* betraying our Lord, was foretold by him ^s, though, at that time, he seemed as little disposed to commit so vile a crime as any of his disciples.

Thus having considered God's knowledge, with respect to the object, either as past, or future, we shall conclude this head, by observing some properties, whereby it appears to be superior to all finite knowledge, and truly divine, *viz.*

1. It is perfect, intimate, and distinct, and not superficial, or confused, or only respecting things in general, as ours often is: thus 'tis said concerning him, that *he bringeth out his hosts by number, and calleth them all by names* ^t, which denotes his exquisite knowledge of all things, as well as propriety in, and using them at his pleasure. And since all creatures *live and move*, or act, *in him* ^u, or by his powerful influence, it follows from hence, that his knowledge is as distinct and particular, as the actions themselves; yea, the most indifferent actions, that are hardly taken notice of by our selves, such as *our down-setting and up-rising* ^x, and every transient thought that is no sooner formed in our minds, but forgotten by us, is known by him *afar off*, at the greatest distance of time, when it is irre-

¹ Job xiv. 17.

^k Deut. xxxii. 34, 35.

^l Mal. iii. 16.

^m Matt. x. 29.

ⁿ 1 Kings xxii. 17, 18, 34.

^o Gen. xv. 13, 14.

^p Exod. iii. 19, 20.

^q Gen. xxxvii. 5, &c.

^r 2 Kings viii. 12, 13.

^s John vi.

70, 71.

^t Isai. xl. 26.

^u Acts xvii. 28.

^x Psal. cxxxix. 2.

70 The practical Improvement of GOD's Omniscience.

coverably lost with respect to us. That God knows all things thus distinctly is evident, not only from their dependence upon him; but 'tis said, that when he had brought his whole work of creation to perfection, *he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*, that is, agreeable to his eternal design, or, if we may so express it, to the *Idea*, or platform, laid in his own mind; and this he pronounced concerning every individual thing, which is as much the object of his omniscience, as the effect of his power: What can be more expressive of the perfection and distinctness of his knowledge than this? Therefore the Apostle might well say, that *there is not any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*^a.

2. He knows every thing, even future contingencies, with a certain and infallible knowledge, without the least hesitation, or possibility of mistake; and therefore, as opinion, or conjecture, is opposed to certainty, it is not in the least applicable to him. In this his knowledge differs from that of the best of creatures, who can only guess at some things that may happen, according to the probable fore-views they have thereof.

3. As to the manner of his knowing all things, it is not, in a discursive way, agreeable to our common method of reasoning, by inferring one thing from another, or by comparing things together, and observing their connection, dependence, and various powers and manner of acting, and thereby discerning what will follow; for such a knowledge as this is acquired, and presupposes a degree of ignorance: conclusions can hardly be said to be known, till the premises, from whence they are deduced, be duly weighed; but this is inconsistent with the knowledge of God, who sees all things in himself; things possible in his own power, and things future in his will, without infering, abstracting, or deducing conclusions from premises, which to do is unbecoming him, who is perfect in knowledge.

4. He knows all things at once, not successively, as we do; for if successive duration be an imperfection, (as was before observed, when we consider'd the eternity of God) his knowing all things after this manner, is equally so; and, in-

deed, this would argue an increase of the divine knowledge, or a making advances in wisdom, by experience, and daily observation of things; which, though applicable to all intelligent creatures, can, by no means, be said of him, whose *understanding is infinite*^y.

We shall now consider what improvement we ought to make of God's omniscience, as to what respects our conduct in this world.

First, Let us take heed that we do not practically deny this attribute.

1. By acting as though we thought that we could hide our selves from the all-seeing eye of God; let us not say, to use the words of *Eliphaz*, *How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven*^z. How vain a supposition is this! since *there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves*^a. Hypocrisy is, as it were, an attempt to hide our selves from God, an acting as though we thought that we could deceive or impose on him, which is called, in scripture, *lying to him*^b; or, *a compassing him about with lyes and deceit*^c. This all are chargeable with, who rest in a form of godliness, as though God saw only the outward actions, but not the heart.

2. By being more afraid of man than God, and venturing to commit the vilest abominations, without considering his all-seeing eye, which we would be afraid and ashamed to do, were we under the eye of man, as the Apostle saith, *It is a shame, even to speak of those things, which are done of them in secret*^d. Thus God says, concerning an apostatizing people of old, speaking to the prophet *Ezekiel*, *Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth*^e.

Secondly, The consideration of God's omniscience should be improved, to humble us under a sense of sin, but especially of secret sins, which are all known to him: thus it is said, *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee; our secret sins in the light of thy countenance*^f; and *his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings*^g. There are many things, which we know, concerning our selves, that no creature is privy to, which occa-

^a Heb. iv. 13.

36.

^c Hof. xi. 12.

^y Psal. cxlviii. 5.

^d Eph. v. 12.

^z Job xxii. 13, 14.

^e Ezek. viii. 12.

^a Chap. xxiv. 22.

^f Psal. xc. 8.

^b Psal. lxxviii.

^g Job xxiv. 21.

fions

sions self-conviction, and might fill us with shame and confusion of face. But this falls infinitely short of God's omniscience; for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things^h. And this should make sinners tremble at the thoughts of a future judgment; for if sins be not pardoned, he is able to bring them to remembrance, and, as he threatens he will do, *Set them in order before their eyes*ⁱ.

Thirdly, The due consideration of this divine perfection, will, on the other hand, tend very much to the comfort of believers: he seeth their secret wants, the breathings of their souls after him, and, as our Saviour saith, *Their Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward them openly*^k. With what pleasure may they appeal to God, as the searcher of hearts, concerning their sincerity, when it is called in question by men. And when they are afraid of contracting guilt and defilement, by *secret faults*, which they earnestly desire, with the Psalmist, to be *cleansed from*^l, it is some relief to them to consider that God knows them, and therefore is able to give them repentance for them; so that they may pray with David; *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*^m. Moreover, it is a quieting thought, to all who are affected with the churches troubles, and the deep-laid designs of its enemies against it, to consider that God knows them, and therefore can easily defeat, and turn them into foolishness.

Fourthly, The due consideration of God's omniscience will be of great use to all Christians, to promote a right frame of spirit in holy duties; it will make them careful how they behave themselves, as being in his sight; and tend to fill them with a holy reverence, as those that are under his immediate inspection, that they may approve themselves to him, in whose presence they are.

XI. God is most wise, or infinite in wisdom, or, as the Apostle expresses it, he is *the only wise God*ⁿ. This perfection considered as absolute, underived, and truly divine, belongs only to him; so that the Angels themselves, the most excellent order of created beings, are said to be destitute of it, or *charged with folly*^o. For our understanding what this

divine perfection is, let us consider; that wisdom contains in it more than knowledge, for there may be a great degree of knowledge, where there is but little wisdom, though there can be no wisdom without knowledge: knowledge is, as it were, the eye of the soul, whereby it apprehends, or sees, things in a true light; and so it is opposed to ignorance, or not knowing things; but wisdom is that whereby the soul is directed in the skilful management of things, or in ordering them for the best; and this is opposed, not so much to ignorance, or error of judgment, as to folly, or error in conduct, which is a defect of wisdom; and it consists more especially in designing the best and most valuable end in what we are about to do, in using the most proper means to effect it, and in observing the fittest season to act, and every circumstance attending it, that is most expedient and conducive thereunto; and also in fore-seeing and guarding against every occurrence that may frustrate our design, or give us an occasion to blame our selves for doing what we have done, or repent of it, or to wish we had taken other measures. Now that we may from hence take an estimate of the wisdom of God, it appears,

1. In the reference, or tendency of all things to his own glory, which is the highest and most excellent end that can be proposed; as he is the highest and best of beings, and his glory, to which all things are refer'd, is infinitely excellent.

Here let us consider,

(1.) That God is, by reason of his infinite perfection, naturally and necessarily the object of adoration.

(2.) He cannot be adored, unless his glory be set forth and demonstrated, or made visible.

(3.) There must be an intelligent creature to behold his glory, and adore his perfections, that are thus demonstrated and displayed.

(4.) Every thing that he does is fit and designed to lead this creature into the knowledge of his glory; and that it is so ordered, is an eminent instance of divine wisdom. We need not travel far to know this, for where-ever we look, we may behold how excellent his name is in all the earth: and because some are so stupid, that they cannot, or will not, in a way of reasoning, infer his divine perfections from things that are without us,

^h 1 John iii. 20. ⁱ Psal. l. 21. ^k Matt. vi. 4. ^l Job iv. 18.

¹ Psal. xix. 12.

^m Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

ⁿ Rom.

therefore he has instamp'd the knowledge thereof on the souls and consciences of men; so that, at some times, they are obliged, whether they will or no, to acknowledge them. There is something which *may be known of God*, that is said to be *manifest in, and shewn to all*; so that *the Gentiles, who have not the law*, that is, the written word of God, *do, by nature, the things*, that is, some things contained therein, and so are *a law unto themselves*, and *shew the work of the law written in their hearts*^p. And, besides this, he has led us farther into the knowledge of his divine perfections by his word, which he is said to have *magnified above all his name*^q: therefore having thus adapted his works and word, to set forth his glory, he discovers himself to be infinite in wisdom.

2. The wisdom of God appears, in that whatever he does is in the fittest season, and all the circumstances thereof tend to set forth his own honour, and argue his foresight to be infinitely perfect; so that he can see no reason to wish it had been otherwise ordered, or to repent thereof. *For all his ways are judgment*^r; *to every thing there is a season and a time, to every purpose under the heaven*; and *he hath made every thing beautiful in his time*^s.

For the farther illustrating of this, since wisdom is known by its effects, we shall observe some of the traces, or foot-steps thereof in his works. And,

(1.) In the work of creation. As it requires infinite power to produce something out of nothing; so the wisdom of God appears in that excellent order, beauty and harmony, that we observe in all the parts of the creation; and in the subserviency of one thing to another, and the tendency thereof to promote the moral government of God in the world, and the good of man, for whose sake this lower world was formed, that so it might be a convenient habitation for him, and a glorious object, in which he might contemplate, and thereby be led to advance the divine perfections, which shine forth therein, as in a glass; so that we have the highest reason to say, *Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all*^t. *He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion*^u. But since this argument hath been insisted on, with great ingenuity, and strength of

reason, by others^x, we shall add no more on that subject, but proceed to consider,

(2.) The wisdom of God, as appearing in the works of providence, in bringing about unexpected events for the good of mankind, and that by means that seem to have no tendency thereto, but rather the contrary; this will appear in the following instances. As,

1st. *Jacob's* flying from his father's house, was wisely ordered, as a means not only for his escaping the fury of his brother, and the trial of his faith, and to humble him for the sinful method he took to obtain the blessing; but also for the building up his family, and encreasing his substance in the world, under a very unjust father-in-law and master, such as *Laban* was.

2^{dly}. *Joseph's* being sold into *Egypt*, was ordered, as a means of his preserving not only that land, but his father's house, from perishing by famine; his imprisonment was the occasion of his advancement. And all this led the way to the accomplishment of what God had foretold relating to his peoples dwelling in *Egypt*, and their wonderful deliverance from the bondage they were to endure therein.

3^{dly}. The wisdom of God was seen in the manner of *Israel's* deliverance out of *Egypt*, in that he first laid them under the greatest discouragements, by suffering the *Egyptians* to increase their tasks and burdens; hardening *Pharaoh's* heart, that he might try his people's faith, and make their deliverance appear more remarkable; and then plaguing the *Egyptians*, that he might punish their pride, injustice and cruelty; and, at last, giving them up to such an infatuation, as effectually procured their final overthrow, and his people's safety.

4^{thly}. In leading *Israel* forty years in the wilderness, before he brought them into the promised land, that he might give them statutes and ordinances, and that they might experience various instances of his presence among them, by judgments and mercies, and so be prepared for all the privileges he designed for them, as his peculiar people, in the land of *Canaan*.

5^{thly}. We have a very wonderful instance of the wisdom of Providence in the *book of Esther*; when *Haman*, the enemy of the *Jews*, had obtained a decree for their destruction, and *Mordecai* was first to

^p Rom. i. 19. Chap. ii. 14, 15. ^q Psal. cxxxviii. 2. ^r Deut. xxxii. 4. ^s Eccles. iii. 1, 11. ^t Psal. civ. 24. ^u Jer. xl. 12.

^x See Ray's Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation, and Derham's Physico-Theology. be

be sacrificed to his pride and revenge, providence turned, whatever he intended against him, upon himself. There was something very remarkable in all the circumstances that led to it, by which the churches deliverance and advancement was brought about, when, to an eye of reason, it seemed almost impossible.

(3.) The wisdom of God appears yet more eminently, in the work of our redemption; this is that which *the Angels desire to look into*, and cannot behold without the greatest admiration; for herein God's *manifold wisdom* is displayed^r. This solves the difficulty, contained in a former dispensation of providence, respecting God's suffering sin to enter into the world, which he could have prevented, and probably would have done, had he not designed to over-rule it, for the bringing about the work of our redemption by Christ; so that what we lost in our first head, should be recovered, with great advantage, in our second, the Lord from heaven.

But though this matter was determined, in the eternal covenant, between the Father and the Son, and the necessity of man seemed to require that Christ should be immediately incarnate, as soon as man fell, yet it was deferred till many ages after; and herein the wisdom of God eminently appeared. For,

1st. God hereby tried the faith and patience of his church, and put them upon waiting for, and depending on him, who was to come; so that though they had not received this promised blessing, yet they *saw it afar off; were persuaded of, and embraced it*, and, with *Abraham, rejoiced to see his day*, though at a great distance^s; and hereby they glorified the faithfulness of God, and depended on his word, that the work of redemption should be brought about, as certainly, as though it had been actually accomplished.

2^{dly}. Our Saviour, in the mean time, took occasion to display his own glory, as the Lord and Governor of his church, even before his incarnation, to whom he often appeared in a human form, assumed for that purpose, as a prelibation thereof; so that they had the greatest reason, from hence, to expect his coming in our nature.

3^{dly}. The time of Christ's coming in the flesh, was such as appeared most seasonable; when the state of the church was very low, religion almost lost among

them, and the darkness they were under exceeding great, which made it very necessary that the Messiah should come; when iniquity almost universally prevail'd among them, then *the deliverer must come out of Sion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob*^a; and when the darkness of the night was greatest, it was the most proper time for *the sun of righteousness to arise, with healing in his wings*^b.

(4.) The wisdom of God farther appears, in the various methods he has taken in the government of his church, before and since the coming of Christ. For,

1st. God at first, as has been before observed^c, left his church, without a written word, till *Moses's* time, that he might take occasion to converse with them more immediately, as an instance of infinite condescension, and to shew them, that though they had no such method of knowing his revealed will, as we have, yet that he could communicate his mind to them another way; and, when the necessity of affairs required it, then his wisdom was seen, in taking this method to propagate religion in the world.

2^{dly}. When God designed to govern his church by those rules, which he hath laid down in scripture, he revealed the great doctrines contained therein, in a gradual way; so that the dispensation of his providence towards them was, like the light of the morning, increasing to a perfect day: he first instructed them by various types and shadows, leading them into the knowledge of the gospel, which was afterwards to be more clearly revealed: he taught them, as they were able to bear it, like children growing in knowledge, till they arrive to a perfect manhood: he first gave them ground to expect the blessings, which he would bestow in after-ages, by the manifold predictions thereof; and afterwards glorified his faithfulness in their accomplishment.

3^{dly}. He sometimes governed them in a more immediate way, and confirmed their faith, as was then necessary, by miracles; and also raised up prophets, as occasion served, whom he furnished, in an extraordinary way, for the service to which he called them, to lead his church into the knowledge of those truths, on which their faith was built.

And, to this we may add, that he gave them various other helps for their faith, by those common and ordinary means

^r 1 Pet. i. 12. Eph. iii. 10. compared with Matt. iv. 16.

^s Heb. xi. 13. John viii. 56. See Page 20.

^a Rom. xi. 26.

^b Mal. iv. 2. com-

of grace, which they were favoured with, and which the gospel church now enjoys, and has ground to conclude that they will be continued until Christ's second coming. Here we might take occasion to consider how the wisdom of God appears, in furnishing his church with a gospel-ministry, and how the management thereof is adapted to the necessities of his people; in employing such about this work, who are duly qualified for it, assisting them in the discharge thereof, and succeeding their humble endeavours; and all this in such a way, as that the praise shall redound to himself, who builds his house, and bears the glory; but this we may have occasion to insist on in a following part of this work^d.

(5.) The wisdom of God appears, in the method he takes, to preserve, propagate, and build up his church in the world. Therefore,

1st. As his kingdom is not of this world, but of a spiritual nature, so he hath ordered that it shall not be promoted by those methods of violence, or carnal policy, by which the secular interests of men are oft-times advanced. He has no where appointed that wars should be proclaimed to propagate the faith, or that persons should be forced to embrace it against their wills, or be lifted under Christ's banner, by bribery, or a prospect of worldly advantage; therefore all the success the gospel has had, which is worthy to be call'd success, has been such as is agreeable to the spirituality of Christ's kingdom; thus his house is to be built, *not by might, nor by power, but by his spirit*^e.

2^{dly}. That the church should flourish under persecution, and those methods which its enemies take to ruin it, should be over-ruled, to its greater advantage; and that hereby shame and disappointment should attend every weapon that is formed against *Sion*, as being without success; and that the church should appear more eminently to be the care of God, when it meets with the most injurious treatment from men, is a plain proof of the glory of this attribute: and, on the other hand, that its flourishing state, as to outward things, should not be always attended with the like marks or evidences of the divine favour, in what more immediately respects salvation, is an instance of the divine wisdom, as God hereby puts his people

on setting the highest value on those things that are most excellent; and not to reckon themselves most happy in the enjoyment of the good things of this life, when they are destitute of his special presence with them.

3^{dly}. The preserving the rising generation from the vile abominations that there are in the world, especially the seed of believers, and calling many of them by his grace, that so there may be a constant reserve of those, who may be added to his church, as others, who have served their generation, are called out of it, which is a necessary expedient for the preserving his interest in the world; in this the wisdom of God is eminently glorified, as well as his other perfections.

From what has been said concerning the wisdom of God, we may infer,

1. That none can be said to meditate aright on the works of God, such as creation, providence, or redemption, who do not behold and admire his manifold wisdom displayed therein, as well as his other perfections. As we conclude him a very unskilful observer of a curious picture or statue, who only takes notice of its dimensions in general, or the matter of which it is composed, without considering the symmetry and proportion of all the parts thereof, and those other excellencies, by which the artist has signalized his skill; so it is below a Christian to be able only to say, that there are such works done in the world, or to have a general *Idea* of its being governed by providence, without having his thoughts suitably affected with the harmonious subserviency of things, and the design of all to set forth the glory of him, who is a God of infinite wisdom,

2. If we cannot understand the meaning of some particular dispensations of providence, so as to admire the wisdom of God therein, let us compare all the parts of providence together, and one will illustrate and add a beauty to another, as our Saviour says to *Peter*, *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*^f; therefore let us compare the various dark dispensations, which the church of God is under at one time, with the glory that shall be put upon it at another.

3. From the displays of the wisdom of God in all his works, let us learn humility, under a sense of our own folly: thus the Psalmist takes occasion to express his low thoughts of mankind in general,

^d See Vol. II. Quest. clvi. and clvii.

^e Zech. iv. 6.

^f John xiii. 7.

and says, *What is man, that thou art mindful of him?* when he had been meditating on the glory of some other parts of his creation, which he calls, *The work of his fingers*ⁿ, that is, creatures, in which his wisdom is displayed in a very eminent degree. But, besides this, we may take occasion to have a humble sense of our own folly, that is, our defect of wisdom, since it is but a little of God that is known by us, and the wonderful effects of divine wisdom are known but in part by us, who dwell in houses of clay.

4. Let us subject our understandings to God, and have a high veneration for his word, in which his wisdom is displayed, which he has ordained, as the means whereby we may be made wise unto salvation; and whatever incomprehensible mysteries we find contained therein, let us not reject or despise them, because we cannot comprehend them.

5. Since God is infinite in wisdom, let us seek wisdom of him, according to the Apostle's advice, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him*ⁱ.

XII. God is most holy, or infinite in holiness, which is essential to him: thus he is often stiled, *The Holy One of Israel*^k; and this attribute is thrice repeated by the Seraphims, who, with the utmost reverence and adoration, *cried, one unto another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts*^l. And he is said to be holy, exclusively of all others, as this is a divine perfection, and as he is infinitely and independently so, *O Lord, thou only art holy*^m; and the reason of this is assigned, to wit, because he is the only God; holiness is his very nature and essence, *There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides him*ⁿ. In considering this divine perfection, we shall enquire,

1. What we are to understand by it; holiness is that whereby he is infinitely opposite to every thing that tends to reflect dishonour, or reproach on his divine perfections; and especially as he is infinitely opposite in his nature, will and works, to all moral impurity; as his power is opposed to all natural weakness, his wisdom to the least defect of understanding or folly, so his holiness is opposed to all moral blemishes, or imperfections, which we call sin; so that it is not so much one single perfection

as the harmony of all his perfections, as they are opposed to sin, and therefore it is called, *The beauty of the Lord*^o; and when the Psalmist prays, that the church may be made and dealt with as an holy people, he says, *Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us*^p. It is that which, if we may so express it, adds a lustre to all his other perfections; so that if he were not glorious in holiness, whatever else might be said of him, would tend rather to his dishonour than his glory, and the beauty of his perfections would be so sullied, that they could not be called divine; as holiness is the brightest part of the image of God in man, without which nothing could be mentioned concerning him, but what turns to his reproach, his wisdom would deserve no better a name than that of subtilty, his power destructive and injurious, his zeal furious madness; so if we separate holiness from the divine nature, all other excellencies would be inglorious, because impure.

2. We proceed to consider the holiness of God, as glorified or demonstrated in various instances.

(1.) In his works. This perfection was as eminently displayed in the work of creation, especially that of Angels and men, as his power, wisdom and goodness; for he made them with a perfect rectitude of nature, without the least spot or propensity to sin, and with a power to retain it; so that there was no natural necessity laid on them to sin, which might infer God to be the author of it: and furthermore, as a moral expedient to prevent it, as well as to assert his own sovereignty, he gave them a law, which was holy, as well as just and good, and warned them of those dreadful consequences that would ensue on the violation thereof; as it would render them unholy, deprive them of his image, and consequently separate them from him, and render them the objects of his abhorrence; and, to this we may add, that his end in making all other things was, that his intelligent creatures might actively glorify him, and be induced to holiness.

(2.) This divine perfection appears likewise in the government of the world, and of the church, in all the dispensations of his providence, either in a way of judgment, or of mercy; therefore he shews his displeasure against nothing but sin, which is the only thing that renders

ⁿ Psal. viii. 3, 4.

ⁱ James i. 5.

^k Isai. i. 4.

^l Chap. vi. 3.

^m Rev. xv. 4.

ⁿ 1 Sam.

^o Psal. xxvii. 4.

^p Psal. xc. 17.

creatures the objects of punishment; and all the blessings he bestows are a motive to holiness. As for his people, whom he hath the greatest regard to, they are described, as *called to be saints*⁹; and it is said of the church of *Israel*, that it was *holiness unto the Lord*^r; and all his ordinances are holy, and to be engaged in with such a frame of spirit, as is agreeable thereunto: thus he says, *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me*^t; and *holiness becometh his house for ever*^v. In like manner, we are to take an estimate of the success thereof, when, through the divine blessing accompanying them, they tend to promote internal holiness in those who are engaged therein, whereby they are distinguished from the rest of the world, and *sanctified by his truth*^u.

Object. It may be objected by some, that God's suffering sin to enter into the world, which he might have prevented, was a reflection cast on his holiness.

Ans. It must be allowed, that God might have prevented the first entrance of sin into the world, by his immediate interposure, and so have kept man upright, as well as made him so; yet let it be considered, that he was not obliged to do this; and therefore might, without any reflection on his holiness, leave an innocent creature to the conduct of his own free will, which might be tempted, but not forced, to sin, especially since he designed to over-rule the event hereof, for the setting forth the glory of all his perfections, and, in an eminent degree, that of his holiness; but this will more particularly be considered under some following *Answers*^x.

From what has been said, concerning the holiness of God, let us take occasion to behold and admire the beauty and glory thereof, in all the divine dispensations, as he can neither do, nor enjoin, any thing but what sets forth his infinite purity; therefore,

1. As he cannot be the author of sin, so we must take heed that we do not advance any doctrines from whence this consequence may be infer'd; this ought to be the standard by which they are to be tried, as we shall take occasion to observe in several instances, and think ourselves as much concerned to advance the glory of this perfection, as of any other: notwithstanding it is one thing for persons to militate against what appears to be a truth, by alledging this popular

objection, that it is contrary to the holiness of God, and another thing to support the charge; this will be particularly considered, when such-like objections, brought against the doctrine of predestination, and several other doctrines, are answered in their proper place.

2. It is an excellency, beauty, and glory, in the Christian religion, which should make us more in love with it, that it leads to holiness, which was the image of God in man. All other religions have indulged, led to, or dispensed with many impurities, as may be observed in those of the Mahometans and Pagans; and the differing religions, professed by them who are called Christians, are to be judged more or less valuable, and accordingly to be embraced or rejected, as they tend more or less to promote holiness. And here I cannot but observe, that it is a singular excellency of the Protestant religion above the Popish, that all its doctrines and precepts have a tendency thereunto; whereas the other admits of, dispenses with, and gives countenance to manifold impurities, as will appear, if we consider some of the doctrines held by them, which lead to licentiousness. As,

(1.) That some sins are, in their own nature, so small, that they do not deserve eternal punishment, and therefore that satisfaction is to be made for them, by undergoing some penances enjoined them by the priest; upon which condition, he gives them absolution, and so discharges them from any farther concern about them; which is certainly subversive of holiness, as well as contrary to scripture, which says, *The wages of sin is death*^y; the word of God knows no distinction between mortal and venial sins, especially in the sense which they give thereof.

(2.) The doctrine of indulgences and dispensations to sin, given forth at a certain rate. This was a great matter of scandal to those who took occasion, for it, among other reasons, to separate from them in the beginning of the reformation, whereby they gave glory to the holiness of God, in expressing a just indignation against such vile practices. It is true, the Papists alledge, in defence thereof, that it is done in compassion to those, whose natural temper leads them, with impetuous violence, to those sins, which they dispense with; and that this is, in some respects, necessary, in as much as the temptations of some, arising from

⁹ 1 Cor. i. 2.
xvii. xxi. and xxx.

^r Jer. ii. 3.

^v Rom. vi. 23.

^t Lev. x. 3.

^y Psal. xciii. 5.

^u John xvii. 17.

^x Quest. xvi.

their condition in the world, are greater than what others are liable to. But none of these things will exempt a person from the guilt of sin, much less warrant the practice of those, who hereby encourage them to commit it.

(3.) Another doctrine maintained by them is, that the law of God, as conform'd to human laws, respects only outward actions, or overt acts, as they are generally called, and not the heart, or principle, from whence they proceed; and therefore that concupiscence, or the corruption of nature, which is the impure fountain, from whence all sins proceed, comes not under the cognisance of the divine law, nor exposes us to any degree of punishment, and that either because they suppose it unavoidable, or else because every sin is an act, and not a habit, the off-spring, or effect of *lust*, which, *when* (as they pervert the words of the Apostle) *it has conceived, brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*^a; whereas the spring of defiled actions is, in reality, more corrupt and abominable, than the actions themselves, how much soever actual sins may be supposed to be more scandalous and pernicious to the world, as they are more visible; if the fruit be corrupt, the tree that brings it forth must be much more so; and though this is not so discernable by others, yet it is abhorred and punished by a jealous God, who searches the heart and the reins; therefore this doctrine is contrary to his holiness.

(4.) The merit of good works, and our justification thereby, is a reflection on this divine perfection; as it makes way for boasting, and is inconsistent with that humility, which is the main ingredient in holiness; and casts the highest reflection on Christ's satisfaction, which is the greatest expedient for the setting forth the holiness of God, as it argues it not to have been absolutely necessary, and substitutes our imperfect works in the room thereof.

(5.) The doctrine of purgatory, and prayers for the dead, which they are as tenacious of, as *Demetrius*, and his fellow-craftsmen, were of the image of *Diana* at *Ephesus*, the destruction whereof would endanger their craft^a; so, if this doctrine should be disregarded, it would bring no small detriment to them. But that which renders it most abominable, is, that it extenuates the demerit of

sin, and supposes it possible for others to do that for them by their prayers, which they neglected to do whilst they were alive, who, from this presumptuous supposition, did not see an absolute necessity of holiness to salvation: these, and many other doctrines, which might have been mentioned, cast the highest reflection on the holiness of God, and not only evince the justice and necessity of the Reformation, but oblige us to maintain the contrary doctrines.

If it be objected, by way of reprisal, that there are many doctrines, which we maintain, that lead to licentiousness, I hope we shall be able to exculpate ourselves; but this we reserve for its proper place, that we may avoid the repetition of things, which we shall be obliged to insist on elsewhere.

3. Let us not practically deny, or cast contempt on this divine perfection, which we may be said to do,

(1.) When we live without God in the world, as though we were under no obligation to holiness. The purity of the divine nature is proposed in scripture, not only as a motive, but so far as conformity to it is possible, as an exemplar of holiness; and therefore we are exhorted to be holy, not only *because he is holy*, but *as he is holy*^b, or so far as the image of God in man consists therein: therefore they who live without God in the world, being *alienated from his life*, viz. *his holiness, and giving themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*, regard not the holiness of his nature or law. These sin presumptuously, and accordingly, are said to *reproach the Lord*^c, as though he was a God that had pleasure in wickedness, or if they conclude him to be infinitely offended with it, they regard not the consequence of being the objects of his displeasure, and fiery indignation.

(2.) Men reflect on the holiness of God when they complain of religion, as tho' it were too strict and severe a thing; a yoke that sits very uneasy upon them, which they resolve to keep at the greatest distance from, especially unless they may have some abatements made, or indulgence given, to live in the commission of some beloved lusts. These cannot bear a faithful reprove; thus *Ahab bated Micah*, *because he did not prophecy good concerning him, but evil*; and the people did not like to hear of the holiness of

^a James i. 15.

^a Acts xix. 25, 27.

^b 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

^c Numb. xv. 30.

God; therefore they desire that the prophets would *cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them*^a; and to this we may add,

(3.) They do, in effect, deny or despise this attribute, who entertain an enmity or prejudice against holiness in others, whose conversation is not only blameless, but exemplary; such make use of the word *Saint*, as a term of reproach, as though holiness were not only a worthless thing, but a blemish or disparagement to the nature of man, a stain on his character, and to be avoided by all who have any regard to their reputation, or, at least, as though religion were no other than hypocrisy, and much more so, when it shines brightest in the conversation of those who esteem it their greatest ornament. What is this, but to spurn at the holiness of God, by endeavouring to bring that into contempt, which is his image and delight?

XIII. God is most just. This attribute differs but little from that of holiness, though sometimes they are thus distinguished; as holiness is the contrariety, or opposition of his nature to sin, justice is an external and visible display thereof; and, in particular, when God is said to be just, he is considered as the Governor of the world; and therefore, when he appears in the glory of his justice, he bears the character of a Judge; accordingly it is said concerning him, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right*^c? and he is said, *without respect of persons, to judge according to every man's work*^d. Now the justice of God is sometimes taken for his faithfulness, which is a doing justice to his word; but this will be more particularly consider'd, when we speak of him as abundant in truth. But, according to the most common and known sense of the word, it is taken either for his disposing, or his distributive justice; the former is that whereby his holiness shines forth in all the dispensations of his providence, as all his ways are equal, of what kind soever they be; the latter, to wit, his distributive justice, consists either in rewarding or punishing, and so is stiled either remunerative or vindictive; in these two respects, we shall more particularly consider this attribute.

I. The justice of God, as giving re-

wards to his creatures; this he may be said to do, without supposing the persons, who are the subjects thereof, to have done any thing by which they have merited them: we often find, in scripture, that the heavenly glory is set forth as a *reward*^e; and it is called, *a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give at that day*^f, to wit, when he appears, in the glory of his justice, to judge the world in righteousness; and it is also said, that it is *a righteous thing with God to recompense to his people who are troubled, rest, when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven*^g. But, for the understanding such-like expressions, I humbly conceive, that they import the necessary and inseparable connection that there is between grace wrought in us, and glory confer'd upon us: it is called, indeed, a *reward*, or a *crown of righteousness*, to encourage us to duty; but, without supposing that, what we do has any thing meritorious in it. If we our selves are less than the least of all God's mercies, then the best actions put forth by us must be so, for the action cannot have more honour ascribed to it than the agent; or if, as our Saviour says, when *we have done all, we must say we are unprofitable servants*^h, and that sincerely, and not in a way of compliment, as some Popish writers understand it, consistently with their doctrine of the merit of good works, we must conclude that it is a reward not of debt, but of grace; and therefore the word is taken in a less proper sense. It is not a bestowing a blessing purchased by us, but for us; Christ is the purchaser, we are the receivers; it is strictly and properly the reward of his merit, but, in its application, the gift of his grace.

2. There is his vindictive justice, whereby he punishes sin, as an injury offered to his divine perfections, an affront to his sovereignty, a reflection on his holiness, and a violation of his law, for which he demands satisfaction, and inflicts punishment, proportioned to the nature of the crime, which he continues to do, till satisfaction be given: this is called, *his visiting iniquity*ⁱ, or *visiting for it*^m; and it is also called, *his setting his face against a person, and cutting him off from amongst his people*ⁿ; and when he does this, his wrath is compared to flames of fire; it is called,

^a Isai. xxx. 11.
^b 2 Tim. iv. 8.
xvii. 10.

^c Gen. xviii. 25.
^d 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

^e 1 Pet. i. 17.
^f Luke xvii. 10.

^g Matt. x. 41, 42. and 1 Cor. iii. 14.
^h Deut. v. 9. ⁱ Jer. v. 9. ⁿ Lev.

The fire of his jealousy^a; and they, who are the objects hereof, are said to fall into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire^p.

But that we may farther consider how God glorifies this perfection, and thereby shews his infinite hatred of sin, we may observe,

(1.) An eminent instance thereof in his inflicting that punishment that was due to our sins, on the person of Christ our Surety. It was, indeed, the highest act of condescending grace that he was willing to be charged with, or to have the iniquity of his people laid upon him; but it was the greatest display of vindictive justice, that he was accordingly punished for it, as *he is said to be made sin for us, who knew no sin^a*; and accordingly God gives a commission to the sword of his justice, to awake and exert it self, in an uncommon manner, against him, *the man his fellow^r*. In this instance, satisfaction is not only demanded, but fully given, in which it differs from all the other displays of vindictive justice; but of this, more will be considered under some following Answers^t.

(2.) The vindictive justice of God punishes sin in the persons of finally impenitent sinners in hell, where a demand of satisfaction is perpetually made, but can never be given, which is the reason of the eternity of the punishment inflicted, which is called, *everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power^r*; this we shall also have occasion to insist on more largely, under a following Answer^u.

In these two instances, punishment is taken in a strict and proper sense: but there is, indeed, another sense, in which many evils are inflicted for sins committed, which, though frequently called punishments, yet the word is taken in a less proper sense, to wit, when believers, who are justified upon the account of the satisfaction which Christ has given for their sins, are said to be punished for them; as when 'tis said, *Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve^x*; and *if his children forsake my law, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him^y*; and the prophet, speaking of some, for whom God would exe-

cute judgment, and be favourable to them in the end, so that they should behold his righteousness; yet he represents them, as *bearing the indignation of the Lord, because they had sinned against him^z*. And as these evils are exceedingly afflictive, being oftentimes attended with a sad apprehension and fear of the wrath of God; so they are called punishments, because sin is the cause of them: yet they differ from punishment in its most proper sense, as but now mentioned; in that, though justice inflicts evils on them for sin, yet it doth not herein demand satisfaction, for that is supposed to have been given, inasmuch as they are considered as justified; and, to speak with reverence, it is not agreeable to the nature of justice to demand satisfaction twice. Nevertheless, it is one thing for God really to demand it, and another thing for believers to apprehend or conclude that such a demand is made; this they may often do, as questioning whether they are believers, or in a justified state: however, God's design, in these afflictive dispensations, is to humble them greatly, and shew them the demerit of sin, whatever he determines shall be the consequence thereof.

Moreover, the persons, who are the subjects of this punishment, are considered not as enemies, but as children, and therefore the objects of his love, at the same time that his hand is heavy upon them; for which reason some have called them castigatory punishments, agreeably to what the Apostle saith, *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth: and that herein he dealeth with them as with sons^a*.

From what has been said, concerning the justice of God in rewarding or punishing, we may infer,

1. Since the heavenly blessedness is called a reward, to denote its connection with grace and duty, let no one presumptuously expect one without the other: the crown is not to be put upon the head of any one, but him that runs the Christian race; and it is a certain truth, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord^b*.

And, on the other hand, as this is a reward of grace, founded on Christ's purchase, let us take heed that we do not ascribe that to our performances, which is wholly founded on Christ's merit. Let every thing that may be reckoned a spur to diligence, in the Idea of a reward, be

^a Zeph. i. 18.

^p Heb. x. 31. compared with Chap. xii. 29.

^z 2 Cor. v. 21.

^r Zech. xiii. 7.

^t The Quest. xlii. and lxxi.

^u 2 Thess. i. 9.

^x Quest. xxix. and lxxxix.

^y Ezra ix. 13.

^z Psal.

lxxxix. 30—33.

^a Micah vii. 9.

^b Heb. xii. 6, 7.

^c Chap. xii. 14.

apprehended and improved by us, to quicken and excite us to duty, but whatever there is of praise and glory therein, let that be ascribed to Christ; so that when we consider the heavenly blessedness in this view, let us say, as the Angels together with that blessed company who are joined with them, are represented, speaking, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*^c. It is the price that he paid which gives it the character of a reward, and therefore the glory of it is to be ascribed to him.

2. From what has been said concerning the vindictive justice of God inflicting punishment on his enemies, let us learn the evil and heinous nature of sin, and so take warning thereby, that we may not expose our selves to the same or like judgments. How deplorable is the condition of those, who have contracted a debt for which they can never satisfy! who are said, *to drink of the wrath of the Almighty, which is poured out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation*^d. This should induce us to flee from the wrath to come, and to make a right improvement of the price of redemption, which was given by Christ, to deliver his people from it.

3. Believers, who are delivered from the vindictive justice of God, have the highest reason for thankfulness; and it is a very great encouragement to them, under all the afflictive evils, which they endure, that the most bitter ingredients are taken out of them. 'Tis true, they are not in themselves *joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them, who are exercised thereby*^e; and let us not presume without ground, but give diligence, that we may conclude that these are the dispensations of a reconciled father, who *corrects with judgment, not in anger, lest he should bring us to nothing*^f. It will afford great matter of comfort, if we can say, that he is, at the same time, *a just God and a Saviour*^g; and, as one observes, though he punishes *for sin*, yet it is not with the punishment *of sin*.

XIV. God is most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, all which perfections are mentioned together in *Exod. xxxiv. 7.* and we shall first consider his goodness, which, in

some respects, includes the other, though in others it is distinguished from them, as will be more particularly observed. This being one of his communicable perfections, we may conceive of it, by comparing it with that goodness which is in the creature, while we separate from it all the imperfections thereof, by which means we may arrive to some *Idea* of it.

Therefore persons are denominated good, as having all those perfections that belong to their nature, which is the most large and extensive sense of goodness, or else it is taken in a moral sense, and so it consists in the rectitude of their nature, as we call a holy man a good man; or lastly, it is taken for one who is beneficent, or communicatively good, and so it is the same with benignity. Now to apply this to the goodness of God, it either includes in it all his perfections, or his holiness in particular, or else his being disposed to impart or communicate those blessings to his creatures, that they stand in need of, in which sense we are here to understand it as distinguished from his other perfections.

This goodness of God supposes that he has, in himself, an infinite and inexhaustible treasure of all blessedness, enough to fill all things, and to make his creatures compleatly happy. This he had from all eternity, before there was any object in which it might be display'd, or any act of power put forth to produce one. It is this the Psalmist intends, when he says^h, *Thou art good*, and when he adds, *thou doest good*; as the former implies his being good in himself, the latter denotes his being so to his creatures.

Before we treat of this perfection in particular, we shall observe the difference that there is between goodness, mercy, grace and patience, which, though they all are included in the divine benignity, and imply in them the communication of some favours that tend to the creatures advantage, as well as the glory of God, yet they may be distinguished with respect to the objects thereof: thus goodness considers its object, as indigent and destitute of all things, and so it communicates those blessings that it stands in need of. Mercy considers its object as miserable, therefore, though an innocent creature be the object of the divine bounty and goodness, it is only a fallen, miserable, and undone creature, that is an

^c Rev. v. 12.

^d Job xxi. 20. compared with Rev. xiv. 10.

^e Heb. xii. 11.

^f Jer. x. 24.

^g Isa.

xlv. 21.

^h Psal. cxix. 68.

object of compassion. And grace is mercy displayed freely, therefore its object is considered not only as miserable, but unworthy; however, though the sinners misery, and unworthiness of pity, may be distinguished, these two *Ideas* cannot be separated, inasmuch as that which renders him miserable, denominates him at the same time guilty, since misery is inseparably connected with guilt, and no one is miserable as a creature, but as a sinner; therefore we are considered as unworthy of mercy, and so the objects of divine grace, which is mercy extended freely, to those who have rendered themselves unworthy of it. And patience, or long-suffering, is the suspending deserved fury, or the continuing to bestow undeserved favours, a lengthening out of our tranquillity; these attributes are to be considered in particular. And,

1. Of the goodness of God. As God was infinite in power from all eternity, before there was any display thereof, or act of omnipotency put forth; he was eternally good before there was any communication of his bounty, or any creature, to which it might be imparted; so that the first display of this perfection was in giving being to all things, which were the objects of his bounty and goodness, as well as the effects of his power; and all the excellencies, or advantages, which one creature hath above another, are as so many streams flowing from this fountain, *He giveth to all, life and breath, and all things*^k.

2. The mercy of God, which considers its object as miserable, is illustrated by all those distressing circumstances, that render sinners the objects of compassion. Are all, by nature, bond-slaves to sin and Satan? It is mercy that sets them free, *delivers them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage*^l. Are we all, by nature, dead in sin, unable to do what is spiritually good, alienated from the life of God? Was our condition miserable, as being without God in the world, and without hope; like the poor infant, mentioned by the prophet, *cast out in the open field, to the loathing of our persons, whom no eye pitied*? it was mercy that *said to us, live*^m; accordingly God is said to have remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for everⁿ.

The mercy of God is either common

or special; common mercy gives all the outward conveniences of this life, which are bestowed without distinction; *as he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust*^o; so it is said, *his tender mercies are over all his works*^p: but his special mercy is that which he bestows on, or has reserved, for the heirs of salvation, which he communicates to them in a covenant way, in and through a Mediator; so the Apostle speaks of God, *as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*^q.

3. As God is said to be merciful, or to extend compassion to the miserable, so he doth this freely, and accordingly is said to be gracious; and as grace is free, so it is sovereign, and bestowed in a discriminating way; that is given to one which he denies to another, and only because it is his pleasure: thus says one of Christ's disciples, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the world*^r? And our Saviour himself glorifies God for the display of his grace, in such a way, when he says, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes*, and considers this as the result of his sovereign will, when he adds, *even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*^s. Now the discriminating grace of God appears in several instances; as,

(1.) In that he should extend salvation to men, rather than to fallen Angels; so our Saviour *took not on him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham*, because he designed to save the one, and to reserve the other, *in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*^t. And among men, only some are made partakers of this invaluable blessing, which all were equally unworthy of, and their number is comparatively very small, therefore they are called a *little flock*, and *the gate*, through which they enter, *is strait*, and *the way narrow that leads to life*, and *few there be that find it*^u. And there are many, who make a considerable figure in the world, for riches, honours, great natural abilities, bestowed by common providence, that are destitute of special grace, while others, who are poor, and despised in the world,

^k Acts xvii. 25.

^l Heb. ii. 15.

^m Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6.

ⁿ Psal. cxxxvi. 23.

^o Matt. v. 45.

^p Psal. cxlv. 9.
with Jude 6.

^q 2 Cor. i. 3.

^r John xiv. 22.

^s Matt. xi. 25, 26.

^t Heb. ii. 16. compared

^u Luke xii. 32. compared with Matt. vii. 13, 14.

82 *Wherein the discriminating Grace of GOD appears.*

are called, and saved; the Apostle observed it to be so in his day, when he says, *not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, things that are not, to bring to nought things that are*^x.

(2.) In several things relating to the internal means, whereby he fits and disposes men for salvation: thus the work of conversion is an eminent instance of discriminating grace, for herein he breaks through, and overcomes, that reluctancy and opposition, which corrupt nature makes against it; subdues the enmity and rebellion that was in the heart of man, works a powerful change in the will, whereby he subjects it to himself, which work is contrary to the natural bias and inclination thereof; and that which renders this grace more illustrious, is, that many of those who are thus converted, were, before this, notorious sinners; some have been *blasphemers, persecutors, and injurious*, as the Apostle says concerning himself before his conversion, and concludes himself to have been *the chief of sinners*; and tells us, how he *shut up many of the saints in prison*, and, when they were put to death, *he gave his voice against them; punished them often in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and, being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them unto strange cities*^y. But you will say, he was, in other respects, a moral man, therefore he gives an instance elsewhere of some who were far otherwise, whom he puts in mind of their having been *fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate abusers of themselves with mankind; thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, such*, says he, *were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified*. Moreover, the change wrought in the soul is unasked for, and so it may truly be said, God is found of them that sought him not; and undesired; for tho' unregenerate sinners desire to be delivered from misery, they are far from desiring to be delivered from sin, or to have repentance, faith and holiness: if they pray for these blessings, 'tis in such a manner, that the Spirit of God hardly calls it prayer; for the spirit of grace, and of

supplications, by which alone we are enabled to pray in a right manner, is what accompanies or flows from conversion; if therefore God bestows this privilege on persons so unworthy of it, and so averse to it, it must certainly be an instance of sovereign and discriminating grace.

(3.) This will farther appear, if we consider how much they, who are the objects thereof, differ from what they were; or if we compare their present, with their former state. Once they were blind and ignorant of the ways of God, and going astray in crooked paths, the Apostle speaks of this in the abstract, *Ye were sometimes darkness*^z, and that *the God of this world had blinded the minds of some, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them*^a; but now they are made *light in the Lord*, and brought into the way of truth and peace. Their hearts were once impenitent, unrelenting, and inclined to sin, without remorse, or self-reflection; nothing could make an impression on them, as being *past feeling, and giving themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness*^b; but now they are penitent, humble, relenting, and broken, under a sense of sin, afraid of every thing that may be an occasion thereof, willing to be reproved for it, and desirous to be set at a greater distance from it. Once they were destitute of hope, or solid peace of conscience; but now they have hope and joy in believing, and are delivered from that bondage, which they were, before this, exposed to; such a happy turn is given to the frame of their spirits: and as to the external and relative change which is made in their state, there is no condemnation to them as justified persons; and therefore they who, before this, were in the utmost distress, expecting nothing but hell and destruction, are enabled to lift up their heads with joy, experiencing the blessed fruits and effects of this grace in their own souls.

(4.) The discriminating grace of God farther appears, in that he bestows these saving blessings on his people, at such seasons, when they appear most suitable, and adapted to their condition; as he is a very present help in a time of trouble, when their straits and difficulties are greatest, then is his time to send relief; when sinners sometimes have wearied themselves in the greatness of their way,

^x 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28.
iv. 4.

^b Eph. iv. 19.

^y 1 Tim. i. 13, 15. compared with Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

^z Eph. v. 8.

^a 2 Cor.

while seeking rest and happiness in other things below himself, and have met with nothing but disappointment therein; when they are brought to the utmost extremity, then he appears in their behalf. And so with respect to believers, when their comforts are at the lowest ebb, their hope almost degenerated into despair, their temptations most prevalent and afflicting, and they ready to sink under the weight that lies on their spirits, when, as the Psalmist says, *their hearts are overwhelmed within them; then he leads them to the rock that is higher than they*^c; when they are even desolate and afflicted, and the troubles of their hearts are enlarged, then he brings them out of their distresses^d.

Thus the grace of God eminently appears, in what he bestows on his people; but if we look forward and consider what he has prepared, for them, or the hope that is laid up in heaven, then we may behold the most amazing displays of grace, in which they, who shall be the happy objects thereof, will be a wonder to themselves, and will see more of the glory of it than can now be expressed in words; as the Psalmist says, in a way of admiration, *Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men*^e!

Object. 1. If it be objected, that the afflictions, which God's people are exposed to in this life, are inconsistent with the glory of his grace and mercy.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that afflictive providences are so far from being inconsistent with the glory of these perfections, that they tend to illustrate them the more. For since sin has render'd afflictions needful, as an expedient, to humble us for it, and also to prevent it for the future, so God designs our advantage thereby; and however grievous they are, yet since they are so over-ruled by him, as the Apostle says, *that they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them, who are exercised thereby*^f, they are far from being inconsistent with the mercy and grace of God.

And this will farther appear, if we consider that these outward afflictions are often attended with inward supports, and spiritual comforts; so that, as the Apostle says concerning himself, *as the sufferings of Christ abound in them, their consolations abound by him*^g; or as the out-

ward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day^h; it was nothing but this could make him say, *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong*ⁱ.

Object. 2. 'Tis farther objected, that the doctrine of free grace leads men to licentiousness; and therefore that what we have said concerning it, is either not true and warrantable, or, at least, should not be much insisted on, for fear this consequence should ensue.

Ans. The grace of God doth not lead to licentiousness, though it be often abused, and presumptuous sinners take occasion from thence to go on, as they apprehend, securely therein, because God is merciful and gracious, and ready to forgive, which vile and disingenuous temper the Apostle observed in some that lived in his days, and expresses himself with the greatest abhorrence thereof, *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid*^k: But does it follow, that because it is abused by some, as an occasion of licentiousness, through the corruption of their natures, that therefore it leads to it? The greatest blessings may be the occasion of the greatest evils; but yet they don't lead to them. That which leads to licentiousness, must have some motive or inducement in it, which will warrant an ingenuous mind, acting according to the rules of equity and justice, to take those liberties; but this nothing can do, much less the grace of God. His great clemency, indeed, may sometimes give occasion to those who hate him, and have ingratitude and rebellion rooted in their natures, to take up arms against him; and an act of grace may be abused, so as to make the worst of criminals more bold in their wickedness, who presume that they may commit it with impunity: but this is not the natural tendency, or genuine effect thereof; nor will it be thus abused by any, but those who are abandoned to every thing that is vile and ungrateful. As the law of God prohibits all sin, and his holiness is opposite to it, so his grace affords the strongest motive to holiness; it is therefore the neglect or contempt of this grace, and a corrupt disposition, to act contrary to the design thereof, that leads to licentiousness. Grace and duty are inseparably connected, so that where God bestows the one,

he

^c Psal. lxi. 2.

^h Chap. iv. 16.

^d Psal. xxv. 16, 17.

ⁱ Chap. xii. 10.

^e Psal. xxxi. 19.

^k Rom. vi. 1, 2.

^f Heb. xii. 11.

^g 2 Cor. i. 5.

he expects the other; yea, duty, which is our act, is God's gift, as the power to perform it is from him: thus when he promises to give his people *a new heart*, and *put his Spirit within them*, and *cause them to walk in his statutes*, he tells them, that they should *remember their evil ways and doings*, and *lothe themselves in their own fight for their iniquities*; which is not only a prediction, respecting the event, but a promise of what he would incline them to do; and when he adds, that *for this he would be enquired of by them*¹, or that they should seek them by fervent prayer, he secures to them, by promise, a disposition and grace to perform this great duty, which is inseparably connected with expected blessings. God himself therefore will take care that, however others abuse his grace, it shall not lead those who are, in a distinguishing way, the objects thereof, to licentiousness,

And to this we may add, that it is a disparagement to this divine perfection to say, that because some take occasion from it to continue in sin, that therefore its glory is to be, as it were, concealed, and not published to the world. As some of old did not care to hear of the holiness of God, and therefore, if the prophets would render their doctrine acceptable to them, they must not insist on that perfection, but *cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before them*^m; so there are many who are as little desirous to hear of the free and discriminating grace of God, which contains the very sum and substance of the gospel, lest it should be abused, whereas the glory thereof cannot be enough admired; and therefore it ought often to be recommended, as what leads to holiness, and lies at the very root of all religion.

And that it may be so improved, let it be farther considered, that it is the greatest inducement to humility, as well as one of the greatest ornaments and evidences of a true Christian. This appears from the nature of the thing, for grace supposes its object unworthy, as has been but now observed; and it argues him a debtor to God for all that he enjoys or expects, which, if it be duly considered, will make him appear vile and worthless in his own eyes, and excite in him a degree of thankfulness in proportion to the ground he has to claim an interest therein, and the extensiveness

of the blessed fruits and effects thereof.

4. We proceed to speak of God as long-suffering, or, as he is stiled by the Apostle, *The God of Patience*ⁿ; sometimes this attribute is set forth in a metaphorical way, and called a *restraining his wrath*^o, and a *refraining himself*, and *holding his peace*, or *keeping silence*^p: and, while he does this, he is represented, speaking after the manner of men, as one that is *weary with forbearing*^q; and he is said to be *pressed*, under a provoking people, *as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves*^r. By all which expressions, this perfection is set forth in a familiar stile, according to our common way of speaking: but that we may briefly explain the nature thereof, let us consider, in general; that it is a branch of his goodness and mercy, manifested in suspending the exercise of his vindictive justice, and in his not punishing in such a degree as sin deserves. But that we may consider this more particularly, we shall observe something concerning the objects thereof, and the various instances in which it is display'd; how it is glorified; and how the glory thereof is consistent with that of vindictive justice; and lastly, how it is to be improved by us.

(1.) Concerning the objects of God's patience. Since it is the deferring of deserved wrath, it follows from hence that an innocent creature cannot be the object of it, inasmuch as vindictive justice makes no demand upon him; nor has it any reserves of punishment laid up in store for him; such a one is, indeed, the object of goodness, but not of forbearance; for punishment cannot be said to be defer'd where it is not due: and, on the other hand, they cannot be said to be the objects thereof, in whom the vindictive justice of God is display'd to the utmost, when all the vials of his wrath are poured forth. Whether the devils are, in some sense, the objects of God's forbearance, as having ground to expect a greater degree of punishment after the final judgment, is disputed by some, who contend about the sense of the word *Forbearance*; they are said, indeed, *to be reserved in chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*^t; that is, though their state be hopeless, and their misery great, beyond expression, yet there is a greater degree of punishment, which they bring upon themselves, by

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31, 37.

^m Isai. xxx. 11.

ⁿ Rom. xv. 5.

^o Psal. lxxvi. 10.

^p Isai. xlii.

14. and Psal. l. 24.

^q Isai. i. 13. Chap. vii. 13. Mal. ii. 17.

^r Amos ii. 13.

^t Jude 6.

The Objects and various Instances of GOD's Patience. 85

all the hostilities they commit against God in this world: this farther appears, from what they are represented, as saying to our Saviour, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* By which it is sufficiently evident that their misery shall be greater than now it is. However, this less degree of punishment, inflicted on them, is never called, in scripture, an instance of God's patience, or long-suffering, towards them; therefore we must conclude that they are not, properly speaking, the objects of the glory of this attribute. Patience then is only extended to sinful men, while in this world; for it is called, in scripture, *The riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering*^u, and is said to lead those, who are the objects of it to repentance; therefore there must be, together with the exercise of this perfection, a day or season of grace granted, which is called, in scripture, with a peculiar emphasis, the sinner's day, or the time of his visitation, in which it ought to be his highest concern to know the things of his peace^x; and the gospel that is preached, in this season of God's forbearance, is call'd, *The word of his patience*^y; so that there is something more in this attribute than barely a deferring of punishment. Accordingly God is said, to wait that he may be gracious^z; and the effects and consequences thereof are various, (as may be said of all the other means of grace) so that sinners, who neglect to improve it, have not only thereby a reprieve from deserved punishment, but all those advantages of common grace, which attend it: But, with respect to believers, it may be said, as the Apostle expresses it, *The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation*^a. It is evidently so to them, and therefore God doth not spare them, that he may take a more fit opportunity to punish them; but he waits till the set time to favour them is come, that he may extend salvation to them; and, in this respect more especially, the exercise of this perfection is founded in the death of Christ. And inasmuch as the elect, who are purchased thereby, were, by the divine appointment, to live throughout all the ages of time, and to have the saving effects of his redemption applied to them, one after another, it was necessary that the patience of God should be so long continued, which is there-

fore glorified more immediately with respect to them, as the result thereof; and, in subserviency thereunto, it is extended to all the world.

(2.) The patience of God has been display'd in various instances.

1st. It was owing hereto that God did not immediately destroy our first parents as soon as they fell; he might then, without the least impeachment of his justice, have banished them for ever from his presence, and left their whole posterity destitute of the means of grace, and have punished them all in proportion to the guilt contracted; therefore that the world is continued to this day, is a very great instance of God's long-suffering.

2^{dly}. When mankind was universally degenerate, and *all flesh had corrupted their way*, before the flood, and God determined to destroy them, yet he would not do this, till his patience had spared them, after he had given an intimation of this desolating judgment, *an hundred and twenty years* before it came^b; and Noah was, during this time, a preacher of righteousness, while the long-suffering of God is said to have waited on them^c.

3^{dly}. The Gentiles, who not only worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, but committed other vile abominations, contrary to the dictates of nature, and thereby filled up the measure of their iniquity, are, notwithstanding, said to be the objects of God's patience, though in a lower sense, than that in which believers are said to be so; accordingly the Apostle observes, *that in times past God suffered all nations to walk in their own ways*, that is, God did not draw forth his sword out of its sheath, by which metaphor the prophet sets forth the patience of God; he did not stir up all his wrath, but gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their heart with food and gladness^d.

4^{thly}. The church of the Jews, before the coming of Christ, had long experience of the forbearance of God. It is said, that he suffered their manners forty years in the wilderness^e; and afterwards, when they often revolted to idolatry, following the customs of the nations round about them, yet he did not utterly destroy them, but, in their distress, raised them up deliverers; and when their iniquity was grown to such a

^t Matt. viii. 29.

^u Rom. ii. 4.

^x Luke xix. 42, 44.

^y Rev. iii. 10.

^z Isai. xxx. 18.

^a 2 Pet. iii. 15.

^b Gen. vi. 2, 3.

^c 2 Pet. ii. 5. compared with 1 Pet. iii. 20.

^d Acts xiv. 16, 17.

Ezek. xxi. 3.

^e Acts xiii. 18.

86 *The Method in which GOD glorifies his Patience.*

height, that none but a God of infinite patience, could have born with them, he, notwithstanding, spared them many years before he suffered them to be carried away captive into *Babylon*; and afterwards, when their rebellion against him was arrived to the highest pitch, when they had crucified the Lord of Glory, yet he spared them some time, till the gospel was first preached to them, and they had rejected it, and thereby *judged themselves unworthy of eternal life*^f.

5^{thly}. After this, the patience of God was extended to those who endeavoured to pervert the gospel of Christ, namely, to false teachers and back-sliding churches, to whom he gave *space to repent, but they repented not*^g. And to this we may add, that he has not yet poured forth the vials of his wrath on the Anti-christian powers, though he has threaten'd, that *their plagues shall come in one day*^h.

(3.) We are next to consider the method which God takes in glorifying this attribute. We have already observed that, with respect to believers, the patience of God is glorified in subserviency to their salvation; but, with respect to others, by whom it is abused, the patience of God discovers it self,

1st. In giving them warning of his judgments before he sends them; *He speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man*ⁱ; and, indeed, all the prophets were sent to the church of the *Jews*, not only to instruct them, but to warn them of approaching judgments, and they were faithful in the delivery of their message. In what moving terms doth the prophet *Jeremiah* lament the miseries, which were ready to befall them! And with what zeal doth he endeavour, in the whole course of his ministry, to bring them to repentance, that so the storm might blow over, or, if not, that their ruin might not come upon them altogether unexpected!

2^{dly}. When the divine warnings are not regarded, but wrath must be poured forth on an obstinate and impenitent people, this is done by degrees. God first sends lesser judgments before greater, or inflicts his plagues, as he did upon *Egypt*, one after another, not all at once; and so he did upon *Israel* of old,

as the prophet *Joel* observes, *first the palmer-worm, then the locust; after that, the canker-worm, and then the caterpillar, devoured the fruits of the earth, one after another*^k. So the prophet *Amos* observes, that God first sent a famine among them, which he calls *cleanness of teeth in all their cities*, and afterwards *some of them were overthrown, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah*^l. Some think, that the gradual approach of divine judgments is intended by what the prophet *Hosea* says, when *the judgments of God* are compared to *the light that goeth forth*^m, which implies more than is generally understood by it, as though the judgments of God should be rendered visible, as the light of the sun is; whereas the prophet seems hereby to intimate, that the judgments of God should proceed, like the light of the morning, that still increases unto a perfect day. And it is more than probable that this is intended by the same prophet, when he represents God as speaking concerning *Ephraim*, that he would be to them as *a moth*, which doth not consume the garment all at once, as when it is cast into the fire, but frets it by degrees, *or like rottenness*, which is of *a spreading nature*ⁿ. Thus the judgments of God are poured forth by degrees, that, at the same time, there may be, comparatively at least, a display of divine patience.

3^{dly}. When God sends his judgments abroad in the world, he often moderates them; none are proportionate to the demerit of sin; as 'tis said of him, that being full of compassion, he *forgave the iniquity* of a very rebellious people, that is, he did not punish them as their iniquity deserved, and therefore he *destroyed them not*, and did *not stir up all his wrath*^o; so the prophet *Isaiah* says concerning *Israel*, that God *hath not smitten him, as he had smote those that smote him; nor is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him; but that he would debate with them in measure, who stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind*^p.

4^{thly}. When God cannot, in honour, defer his judgments any longer, he pours them forth, as it were, with reluctance, as a judge, when he passeth sentence on a criminal, doth it with a kind of regret, not insulting, but rather pitying, his misery, which is unavoidable, because the course of justice must

^f Acts xiii. 46.
iv. 8, 11.

^g Rev. ii. 21.

^h Chap. xviii. 8.

ⁱ Job xxxiii. 14, 17.

^k Joel i. 4.

^l Amos

^m Hos. vi. 5.

ⁿ Chap. v. 12.

^o Psal. lxxviii. 38.

^p Isai. xxvii. 7, 8.

not be stop'd. Thus the prophet says, that *God doth not afflict willingly*, that is, with delight or pleasure, *nor grieve the children of men*^a, that is, he doth not punish them, because he delights to see them miserable; but to secure the rights of his own justice in the government of the world: so when *Israel* had been guilty of vile ingratitude and rebellion against him, and he threatens to turn his hand upon them, and destroy them, he expresseth himself in such terms, speaking after the manner of men, as imply a kind of uneasiness, when he says, *Ab! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies*^r; and, before God gave up *Israel* into the hands of the *Assyrians*, he seems, again speaking after the manner of men, to have an hesitation or debate in his own mind, whether he should do this or no, when he says, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together*^s: and when our Saviour could not prevail upon *Jerusalem* to repent of their sins, and embrace his doctrine, when he was obliged to pass a sentence upon them, and to tell them, that the *things of their peace were hid from their eyes*, and that *their enemies should cast a trench about the city, and should lay it even with the ground*, he could not speak of it without tears, *when he beheld the city, he wept over it*^t.

(4.) The next thing to be considered, concerning the patience of God, is, that the glory of it is consistent with that of his vindictive justice; or how he may be said to defer the punishment of sin, and yet appear to be a sin-hating God.

It is certain, that the glory of one divine perfection cannot interfere with that of another; as justice and mercy meet together in the work of redemption, so justice and patience do not oppose each other in any of the divine dispensations. 'Tis true, their demands seem to be various; justice requires that the stroke should be immediately given, but patience insists on a delay hereof, inasmuch as without this it does not appear to be a divine perfection; if therefore patience be a divine attribute, and its glory as necessary to be display'd, as that of any of his other perfections, it must be

glorified in this world, and that by delaying the present exercise of vindictive justice in the highest degree, or it cannot be glorified at all: justice will be glorified, throughout all the ages of eternity, in those who are the objects thereof; but patience can then have no glory, since (as has been before observed) the greatest degree, either of happiness or misery, is inconsistent with the exercise thereof; therefore this being a perfection, which redounds so much to the divine honour, we must not suppose that there is no expedient for its being glorified, or that the glory of vindictive justice is inconsistent with it.

Now this harmony of these two perfections must be a little considered. Justice, 'tis true, obliges God to punish sin, yet it does not oblige him to do it immediately; but the time, as well as the way, is to be resolved into his sovereign will. In order to make this appear, let us consider, that the design of vindictive justice, in all the punishment it inflicts, is either to secure the glory of the holiness of God; or to assert his rights, as the Governor of the world; now if the deferring of punishment doth not interfere with either of these, then the glory of God's patience is not inconsistent with that of his vindictive justice. But more particularly,

First, The glory of his holiness is, notwithstanding this, sufficiently secured; for though he delays to punish sin, in the highest degree, yet, at the same time, he appears to hate it, by the threatnings which he hath denounced against sinners, which shall certainly have their accomplishment: if he says, that *he is angry with the wicked every day*, and that *his soul hateth them*, is there any reason to suppose the contrary? or if he has threatened that *he will rain upon them snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest*, which shall be the *portion of their cup*, and that because, as *the righteous Lord, he loveth righteousness*^u, is not this a sufficient security, for the glory of his holiness, to fence against any thing that might be alledged to detract from it? If threatened judgments be not sufficient, for the present, to evince the glory of this divine perfection; then it will follow, on the other hand, that the promises he has made of blessings not yet bestowed, are to be as little regarded for the encouraging our hope, and securing the glory of

^a Lament. iii. 33. and xi. 6, 7.

^r Isai. i. 24.

^s Hos. xi. 8.

^t Luke xix. 41, &c.

^u Psal. vii. 11.

88 GOD'S Patience consistent with his vindictive Justice.

his other perfections; and then his holiness would be as much blemished in delaying to reward, as it can be supposed to be in delaying to punish.

If therefore the truth of God, which will certainly accomplish his threatnings, be a present security for the glory of his holiness, it is not absolutely necessary that vindictive justice should be immediately exercised in the destruction of sinners, and so exclude the exercise of God's forbearance and long-suffering.

And to this it may be added, that there are many terrible displays of God's vindictive justice in his present dealing with sinners; as it is said, *The Lord is known by the judgment, which he executes*, as well as by those he designs to pour forth on his enemies; the wicked are now *snared in the work of their own hands*, but in the end they shall be *turn'd into hell, and all the nations that forget God*. If vindictive justice takes occasion to inflict many temporal and spiritual judgments upon sinners in this world, then the glory of God's holiness is illustrated at the same time that his patience is prolonged. This may be observed in God's dealing with his murmuring and rebellious people in the wilderness, which gave him occasion to take notice of the abuse of his patience, and to say, *How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?* Upon this, justice is ready to strike the fatal blow; *I will*, says God, *smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them*; which gives Moses occasion to intercede for them, and pleads the glory of God's patience, *The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy*; Pardon, says he, *I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt, even until now*; by which he means, as I humbly conceive, spare thy people, as thou hast often done, when, by reason of their provocations, thou might'st justly have destroy'd them; and God answers him in the following words, *I have pardon'd, according to thy word*; but he adds, *As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*, that is, with the report of the glory of his vindictive justice, which should be spread far and near; and then he threatens them that they should not see the land of *Canaan*, viz. those who murmur'd against him; so that vindictive justice had

its demands fulfilled in one respect, while patience was glorified in the other; on which occasion the Psalmist says *, *Thou answeredst them; O Lord*, namely, Moses's prayer for them, but now mentioned, *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions*.

Secondly, Consider the vindictive justice of God, as tending to secure his rights, as the Governor of the world, and being ready to take vengeance for sin, which attempts to controul his sovereign authority, and disturb the order of his government. Now the stroke of justice may be suspended for a time, that it may make way for the exercise of patience, provided there be no just occasion given hereby for men to trample on the sovereignty of God, despise his authority, or rebel against him, without fear: but these consequences will not necessarily result from his extending forbearance to sinners; for we do not find that the delaying to inflict punishment among men is any prejudice to their government, therefore why should we suppose that the divine government should suffer any injury thereby; when a prince, for some reasons of state, puts off the trial of a malefactor for a time, to the end that the indictment may be more fully proved, and the equity of his proceedings more evidently appear, this is always reckoned a greater excellency in his administration, than if he should proceed too hastily therein; and we never find that it tends to embolden the criminal to that degree as impunity would do; for he is punished, in part, by the loss of his liberty, and if he be convicted, then he loses the privilege of an innocent subject; his life is forfeited, and he is in daily expectation of having it taken away. If such a method as this tends to secure the rights of a government, when a prince thinks fit to allow a reprieve to some for a time; may not God stop the immediate proceedings of vindictive justice for a time, without the least infringement made, either on his holiness, or his rectoral justice, which leads us to consider,

(5.) How the patience of God is to be improved by us; and,

1st. Since 'tis a divine perfection, and there is a revenue of glory due to God for the display thereof, this should put us upon the exercise of those graces, which it engages us to. Some of the divine attributes tend to excite our fear, but this should draw forth our admira-

* Psal. ix. 16, 17.

u Numb. xiv. 11, 18—21.

x Psal. xcix. 8.

tion and praise: and we have yet more reason to adore and admire the divine forbearance, when we consider,

First, How justly he might destroy us. The best man on earth may say, with the Psalmist, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?* He need not watch for occasions, or diligently search out some of the inadvertencies of life to find matter for our conviction and condemnation, since the multitude, and heinous aggravation of our sins, proclaim our desert of punishment, which might provoke, and immediately draw down, his vengeance upon us; and that which farther enhances our guilt is, that we provoke him, though laid under the highest obligations to the contrary.

Secondly, How easily might he bring ruin and destruction upon us. He does not forbear to punish us for want of power, as earthly kings often do; or because the exercise of justice may be apprehended, as a means to weaken their government, or occasion some rebellions, which they could not easily put a stop to? Thus *David* says concerning himself, that he was *weak, though anointed king*, and that *the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him*, on the occasion of *Joab's* having forfeited his life, when the necessity of affairs required the suspending his punishment^a; but this cannot be said of God, who is represented as *slow to anger, and great in power*^a, that is, he does not punish, though he easily could: it would be no difficulty for him immediately to destroy an ungodly world, any more than 'tis for us to crush a moth or a worm, or break a leaf: finite power can make no resistance against that which is infinite; what are briars and thorns before the consuming fire?

^{2^{dly}}. Let us take heed that we do not abuse this divine perfection; 'tis a crime to abuse the mercy of God in the smallest instances thereof, but much more to slight and condemn the riches of his forbearance, or mercy, extended to so great a length, as it has been to most of us; and this is done,

1. By those who infer, from his forbearing to pour forth his fury on sinners, that he neglects the government of the world; or take occasion from thence to deny a providence, and because his threatenings are not executed at present, therefore they do, as it were, defy him to do his worst against them; this some

are represented as doing, with an uncommon degree of presumption, and that with a scoff, for they are termed *scoffers, walking after their own lusts; saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were, from the beginning of the creation*^b.

2. By those who, ^{take} occasion from hence to sin presumptuously, and because he not only delays to punish; but, at the same time, expresses his willingness to receive returning sinners, at what time soever they truly repent, take occasion to persist in their rebellion, concluding that 'tis time enough to submit to him; which is not only to abuse, but, as it were, to wear out his patience, and provoke his indignation, like them, of whom it is said, that *because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil*^c. But you will say, these are uncommon degrees of wickedness, which only the vilest part of mankind are chargeable with; therefore let us add,

3. That a bare neglect to improve our present season, and day of grace, or to embrace the great salvation offered in the gospel, is an abuse of God's patience; and this will certainly affect the greatest number of those who are favoured with the gospel-dispensation; and, indeed, who are there that improve it as they ought? and therefore all are said, more or less, to abuse the patience of God, which affords matter of great humiliation in his sight.

Now that we may be duly sensible of this sin, together with the consequences thereof, let us consider; that this argues the highest ingratitude, and that more especially, in a professing people; therefore the Apostle, reproving the *Jews* for this sin, puts a very great emphasis on every word, when he says, *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering*^d? Let us also consider, that the consequence thereof is very destructive, inasmuch as this is the only opportunity that will be afforded to seek after those things that relate to our eternal welfare. What stress does the Apostle lay on the word *Now*, which is twice repeated, as well as the word *Behold*, which is a note of attention, implying, that he had something remarkable to communicate, when he says,

^a Psal. cxxx. 3.
^b Rom. ii. 4.

^c 2 Sam. iii. 39.

^d Nah. i. 3.

^e 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

^f Eccl. viii. 17.

90 *The practical Improvement of GOD's Patience.*

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation^e: and to this we may add, which is a very awakening consideration; that the abuse of God's patience will expose; finally impenitent sinners, to a greater degree of his vengeance. Thus when the forbearance of God had been extended to *Israel* for many years, from his bringing them up out of the land of *Egypt*; and this had been attended all that time with the means of grace, and many warnings of approaching judgments, he tells them; *You only have I known, of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you*, that is, my wrath shall fall more heavily upon you, *for all your iniquities*^f; and when God is represented, as coming to reckon with *Babylon*, the cup of his wrath must be filled double; *how much she hath glorified her self, saith God, and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment give her; for she saith, in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*^g.

3^{dly}. Let us, on the other hand, improve God's patience, by duly considering the great end and design thereof, and what encouragement it affords to universal holiness: it is a great relief to those who are at the very brink of despair; for if they cannot say that it has hitherto lead them to repentance, as apprehending themselves to be yet in a state of unregeneracy, let such consider, that, notwithstanding this, a door of hope is still opened, and the golden scepter held forth, the invitation given to come to Christ; therefore let this excite us to a diligent attendance on the means of grace, for though forbearance is not to be mistaken, as it is by many, for forgiveness, yet we are encouraged to wait and hope for it, in all God's holy institutions, according to the tenor of the gospel.

And they who are not only spared, but pardoned, to whom grace has not only been offered, but savingly applied, may be encouraged to hope for farther displays thereof, as well as to improve what they have receiv'd, with the greatest diligence and thankfulness.

4^{thly}. Let us consider the great obligation we are laid under, by the patience of God, to a constant exercise of the grace of patience, in our behaviour towards God and man.

1. In our behaviour towards God; we are hereby laid under the highest engagements to submit to his disposing

will, and, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content, without murmuring, or repining, when under afflictive providences, *Shall we receive good at his hand, and shall we not receive evil*^h? Has he exercised so long forbearance towards us, not only before we were converted, when our life was a constant course of rebellion against him: but has he since, not only passed by, but forgiven, innumerable offences? and shall we think it strange when he testifies his displeasure against us in any instances? Shall we be froward and uneasy, because he does not immediately give us what we desire, or deliver us from those evils we groan under?

2. Let us exercise patience, in our behaviour towards men. Shall we give way to, or express unbecoming resentment against those whom we converse with, for injuries done us, which are often rather imaginary than real? Or if they are very great, as well as undeserved, let not our passions exceed their due bounds; much less let us not meditate revenge, but consider how many injuries the great God has passed over in us, and how long his patience has been extended towards us.

XV. God is abundant in truth. That we may understand what is meant by this perfection, we may observe the difference between his being called a true God, and a God of truth; though they seem to import the same thing, and are not always distinguished in scripture: thus he that receiveth Christ's testimony, is said to *set to his seal that God is true*, that is, in accomplishing what he has promised, respecting the salvation of his people, or that he is a God of truth; and elsewhere it is said, *Let God be true, but every man a liar*, that is a God of truth: yet they are, for the most part, distinguished; so that when he is called the true God, or the only true God, it does not denote one distinct perfection of the divine nature, but the Godhead, in which respect it includes all his divine perfections, and is opposed to all others, who are called Gods, but are not so by nature; but this will be more particularly considered in the *next Answer*.

But when, on the other hand, we speak of him, as the God of truth, we intend hereby that he is true to his word, or a God that cannot lye, whose faithfulness is unblemished, because he is a

^e 2 Cor. vi. 2.

^f Amos iii. 2.

^g Rev. xviii. 6, 7.

^h Job ii. 10.

God of infinite holiness, and therefore whatever he has spoken, he will certainly bring it to pass. This respects either his threatnings, or his promises: as to the former of these, it is said, that *the judgments of God*, that is, the sentence he has passed against sinners, *is according to truth*ⁱ; and the display of his vindictive justice is called, his *accomplishing his fury*^k. This renders him the object of fear, and it is, as it were, a wall of fire round about his law, to secure the glory thereof from the insults of his enemies.

There is also his faithfulness to his promises, in which respect he is said to be the *faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, unto a thousand generations*^l. This is that which encourages his people to hope and trust in him, and to expect that blessedness, which none of his perfections would give them a sufficient ground to lay claim to, were it not promised, and this promise secured by his infinite faithfulness. Almighty power is able to make us happy, and mercy and goodness can communicate every thing that may contribute thereunto; but it does not from hence follow that they will, since God is under no natural obligation to glorify these perfections: but when he is pleased to give forth a promise relating hereunto, and the accomplishment thereof ascertained to us by his infinite faithfulness; this renders these blessings not only possible, but certain, and so affords, to the heirs of salvation, strong consolation. It is this that renders things future as certain as though they were present, and so lays a foundation for our rejoicing, in hope of eternal life, whatever difficulties may seem to lie in the way of it.

Here we may take occasion to consider the blessings which are secured by the faithfulness of God, of which some respect mankind in general, and the blessings of common providence, *viz.* that the world should be preserved, and *all flesh not perish out of it*, from the deluge to Christ's second coming; and that, during this time, the regular course of nature should not be altered, but *that seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, should not cease*^m.

There are also promises made to the church in general, that it should have a being in the world, notwithstanding all the shocks of persecution, which it is exposed to; and, together with these, God has given the greatest security, that the ordinances of divine worship should be continued, and that, *in all places where he records his name, he will come to his people and bless them*ⁿ. And to this we may add, that he has promised to increase and build up his church; and that to *Shiloh*, the great Redeemer, should the *gathering of the people be*, and that he would *multiply them, that they should not be few*, and also *glorify them that they should not be small*^o; and that the glory should be of an increasing nature, especially that which it should arrive to in the latter ages of time, immediately before its exchanging this militant for a triumphant state in heaven.

Moreover, there are many great and precious promises made to particular believers, which every one of them have a right to lay claim to, and are oftentimes enabled so to do, by faith, which depends entirely on this perfection: and these promises are such as respect the increase of grace; that *they shall go from strength to strength*, or that *they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength*^p; and that they shall be recovered, after great backslidings^q; and be enabled to persevere in that grace, which is begun in them, till it is crowned with compleat victory^r; and also that they shall be made partakers of that inward peace and joy, which accompanies or flows from the truth of grace^s; and that all this shall be attended with perfect blessedness in heaven at last^t. The scripture abounds with promises of the like nature, which are suited to every condition, and afford relief to God's people, under all the difficulties they meet with in the world, the accomplishment whereof is made sure to them by this divine perfection.

Object. 1. It is objected against this divine attribute; that God has not, in some instances, fulfilled his threatnings, which has tended to embolden some in a course of obstinacy and rebellion against him; particularly that the first threatning was not executed as soon as man fell; for though God told our first parents, that in the very day they should eat of the forbidden fruit, they should

ⁱ Rom. ii. 2.

^k Ezek. vi. 12.

^l Deut. vii. 9.

^m Gen. ix. 11. compared with Chap. viii. 22.

ⁿ Exod. xx. 24.

^o Gen. xlix. 10. compared with Jer. xxx. 19.

^p Psal. lxxxiv. 7. and Isai. xl. 31.

^q Psal. xxxvii. 24. Psal. lxxxix. 30—33.

^r 2 Cor. xii. 9. Rom. xvi. 20. Job xvii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 57.

^s Isai.

xl. 1. Chap. lvii. 19. Chap. xxxii. 17.

^t Psal. lxxiii. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

92 *Objections against the Faithfulness of God answer'd.*

surely die; yet *Adam* lived after this, nine hundred and thirty years ^u.

It is also objected, that God threatened to destroy *Nineveh*, within *forty days* after *Jonah* was sent to publish this message to them ^x; nevertheless they continued in a flourishing state many years after.

Ans. 1. As to what respects the first threatening, that death should immediately ensue upon sins being committed, we shall have occasion to speak to this in its proper place ^v; and therefore all that need be replied to it at present is, that the threatening was, in some respect, executed the day, yea, the moment, in which our first parents sinned: If we take it in a legal sense, they were immediately brought into a state of condemnation, which, in a forensick sense, is often called *Death*; they were immediately separated from God, the fountain of blessedness, and plunged into all those depths of misery, which were the consequence of their fall; or if we take *Death*, the punishment threatened, for that which is, indeed, one ingredient in it, to wit, the separation of soul and body; or for the greatest degree of punishment, consisting in everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, then it is sufficient to say; that man's being liable hereunto was the principal thing intended in the threatening. Certainly God did not hereby design to tie up his own hands, so as to render it impossible for him to remit the offence, or to recover the fallen creature out of this deplorable state; and therefore if you take *Death* for that which is natural, which was not inflicted till nine hundred and thirty years after, then we may say, that his being exposed to, or brought under an unavoidable necessity of dying the very day that he sinned, might be called his dying from that time; and the scripture will warrant our using the word in that sense, since the Apostle, speaking to those who were, by sin, liable to death, says, *The body is dead because of sin* ^z, that is, it is exposed to death, as the consequence thereof, though it was not actually dead; and if we take death for a liability to eternal death, then the threatening must be supposed to contain a tacit condition, which implies, that man was to expect nothing but eternal death, unless some expedient were found out, which the miserable creature then knew nothing of,

to recover him out of that state into which he was fallen.

2. As to what concerns the sparing of *Nineveh*; we have sufficient ground to conclude that there was a condition annexed to this threatening, and so the meaning is; that they should be destroyed in forty days, if they did not repent: this condition was designed to be made known to them, otherwise *Jonah's* preaching would have been to no purpose, and the warning given would have answered no valuable end; and it is plain, that the *Ninevites* understood it in this sense, otherwise there would have been no room for repentance; so that God connected the condition with the threatening: and as, on the one hand, he designed to give them repentance, so that the event was not dubious and undetermined by him, as depending on their conduct, abstracted from his providence; so, on the other hand, there was no reflection cast on his truth, because this provisory expedient, for their deliverance, was as much known by them as the threatening itself.

Object. 2. It is objected that several promises have not had their accomplishment. Thus there are several promises of spiritual blessings, which many believers do not experience the accomplishment of in this life, which has given occasion to some to say with the Psalmist, *Doth his promise fail for ever more* ^a?

Ans. It is true, that all the promises of God are not literally fulfilled in this world to every particular believer; the promise of increase of grace is not actually fulfilled, while God suffers his people to backslide from him, and the work of grace is rather declining than sensibly advancing; neither are the promises, respecting the assurance and joy of faith, fulfilled unto one that is sinking into the depths of despair; nor those that respect the presence of God in ordinances, to such as are destitute of the influences of his grace therein; nor are the promises of victory over temptation fulfilled, to those who are not only assaulted, but frequently overcome by satan, when it is as much as they can do to stand their ground against him; and there are many other instances of the like nature: notwithstanding the truth of God may be vindicated, if we consider,

1. That there is no promise made, whereof there are not some instances of its accomplishment in kind; this there-

^u Gen. ii. 17. compared with Chap. v. 5. ^z Jon. iii. 4.

^v See Quest. xx.

^x Rom. viii. 10.

^a Psal. lxxvii. 8.

fore is a sufficient conviction to the world, that there are such blessings bestowed as God has promised.

2. Those who are denied these blessings, may possibly be mistaken, when they conclude themselves to be believers; and then 'tis no wonder that they are destitute of them; for God has promised to give joy and peace only in a way of believing; or first to give the truth of grace, and then the comfortable fruits and effects thereof. But we will suppose that they are not mistaken, but have experienced the grace of God in truth; yet their graces are so defective, that they know but little of their own imperfections, if they don't take occasion, from thence, to justify God, who withholdeth those blessings from them, and to adore, rather than call in question, the equity of his proceeding therein. And if remunerative justice be not laid under obligations to bestow these blessings by any thing perform'd by us, then certainly the faithfulness of God is not to be impeached, because he is pleased to deny them.

3. In denying these blessings, he oftentimes takes occasion to advance his own glory some other way, by trying the faith and patience of his people, correcting them for their miscarriages, humbling them by his dealings with them, and over-ruling all for their good in the end, which is an equivalent for those joys and comforts which they are deprived of. And, indeed, God has never promised these blessings to any, but with this reserve, that if he thinks it necessary, for his own glory, and their good, to bring about their salvation some other way, he will do it, without the least occasion given hereby to detract from the glory of his faithfulness.

4. All these promises, which have not had their accomplishment in kind, in this world, shall be accomplished in the next, with the greatest advantage; so that then they will have no reason to complain of the least unfaithfulness in the divine administration. If rivers of pleasure, at God's right hand for ever, will not compensate, for the want of some comforts, while we are in this world, or silence all objections against his present dealings with men, nothing can do it; or if the full accomplishment of all the promises hereafter, will not secure the glory of this perfection, it is a sign that men are

disposed to contend with the Almighty, who deny it; therefore to such we may justly apply God's own words to Job, *He that reproveth God, let him answer it; or, as he farther says, Wilt thou disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*^b

We shall now consider how the faithfulness of God ought to be improved by us. And,

(1.) The consideration thereof may be a preservative against presumption, on the one hand; or despair, on the other. Let no one harden himself in his iniquity; or think that because the threatnings are not yet fully accomplished, therefore they never shall; it is one thing for God to delay to execute them, and another thing to resolve not to do it. We may vainly conclude, that the bitterness of death is past, because *our houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them*; but let it be consider'd, that *the wicked are reserved for the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath*^c; the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this. His threatnings lay him under an obligation to punish finally impenitent sinners, because he is a God of truth; therefore let none harden themselves against him, or expect impunity in a course of open rebellion against him. And, on the other hand, let not believers give way to despair of obtaining mercy, or conclude, that because God is withdrawn, and hides his face from them, that therefore he will never return; or, because his promises are not immediately fulfilled, that therefore they never shall, since his faithfulness is their great security, *he will ever be mindful of his covenant*^d.

(2.) Let us compare the providences of God with his word, and see how every thing tends to set forth his faithfulness. We are very stupid, if we take no notice of the great things that are doing in the world; and we behold them to little purpose, if we do not observe how this divine perfection is glorified therein. The world continues to this day, because God has several things yet to do in it, in pursuance of his promises; the whole number of the elect are to be gathered, and brought in to Christ; their graces must be tried, and their faith built up in the same way, as it has been in former ages; therefore the church is preserved, and *the gates of hell have*

^b Job xl. 2. compared with Ver. 8.

^c Job xxi. 9. compared with Ver. 30.

^d Psal. cxi. 5.

not prevailed against it, according to his word^e; and as it was of old, so we now observe that the various changes which are made in civil affairs, are all render'd subservient to its welfare; *the earth helps the woman^f*, not so much from its own design, as by the appointment of providence; and why does God order it so, but that his promises might be fulfilled? And that the same ordinances should be continued, and that believers should have the same experience of the efficacy and success thereof, as the consequence of his presence with them, which he has given them ground to expect *unto the end of the world^g*, are blessings in which his faithfulness is eminently glorified.

(3.) This divine perfection is a sure foundation for our faith. As his truth, with respect to what he has revealed, is an infallible ground for our faith of assent, so his faithfulness, in fulfilling his promises, affords the highest encouragement for our trust and dependence on him: thus we are said to *commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator^h*; and, when we lay the whole stress of our salvation upon him, we have no reason to entertain any doubt about the issue thereof. Moreover, are we exposed to evils in this world? we may conclude, that as *he has delivered, and does deliver*, so we have reason to *trust in him, that he will deliver usⁱ*; and is there much to be done for us, to make us meet for heaven? we may be confident of this very thing, *that he that has begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ^k*.

(4.) The faithfulness of God should be improved by us, as a remedy against that uneasiness and anxiety of mind, which we often have about the event of things, especially when they seem to run counter to our expectation. Thus when there is but a very melancholy prospect before us, as to what concerns the glory of God in the world, and the flourishing state of his church in it, upon which we are ready to say with *Joshua, Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy great name^l*? or when we have many sad thoughts of heart about the rising generation, and are in doubt whether they will adhere to, or abandon the interest of Christ; when we are ready to fear whether there will be a reserve of faithful men, who will stand up for his gospel, and fill the places of

those who are called off the stage, after having served their generation by the will of God; or when we are too much oppressed with carking cares about our outward condition in the world; when, like Christ's disciples, we are immoderately thoughtful *what we shall eat, what we shall drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed^m*, or how we shall be able to conflict with the difficulties that lie before us: our great relief against all this solicitude is to be derived from the faithfulness of God; for since godliness has the promise annexed to it, of *the life that now is, as well as of that which is to comeⁿ*; this promise shall have its accomplishment, so far as shall most redound to God's glory, and our real advantage.

(5.) The consideration of the faithfulness of God should be improved, to humble, and fill us with shame and confusion of face, when we consider how treacherously we have dealt with him, how unsteadfast we have been in his covenant, how often we have broke our own promises and resolutions, that we would walk more closely with him, how frequently we have back-sliden from him, contrary to all the engagements which we have been laid under. Have we found any unfaithfulness in him? Has he, in the least instance, been worse than his word? as God says, when he reproves his people, *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain^o*?

QUEST. VIII. Are there more Gods than one?

ANSW. There is but one only, the living and true God.

I. IN this Answer, God is described as the living and true God. As life is the greatest excellency belonging to the nature of any finite being, upon which account some have concluded that the lowest degree thereof renders a creature more excellent in it self, than the most glorious creatures that are without it; and inasmuch as intelligent creatures have a superior excellency to all others, because that which gives life to them, or the principle by which they

^e Matt. xvi. 18.
^k Phil. i. 6.

^f Rev. xii. 16.
^l Josh. vii. 9.

^g Matt. xxviii. 20.
^m Matt. vi. 31.

^h 1 Pet. iv. 19.
ⁿ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

ⁱ 2 Cor. i. 10.
^o Jer. ii. 5.

act, as such, is most excellent; so the life of God is that whereby he infinitely excels all finite beings; therefore when he is called the living God, this is not one single perfection of the divine nature, but 'tis expressive of all his divine perfections. Thus when God represents himself, in scripture, as giving his people the highest assurance of any thing which he designs to do, he useth the form of an oath, and sweareth by his life, *As I live*; or, *as truly as I live*^p, which imports the same thing, as when he says, *I have sworn by my self*^q; so that when he is called the living God, his glory is set forth, as a God of infinite perfection: But this has been considered under the *last Answer*.

Therefore we may farther observe, that when God is stiled the living God, it connotes the display of all his perfections, as life is a principle of action; and hereby he is distinguished from lifeless idols, who were reputed Gods by their stupid and profane worshippers. Thus the Apostle lays down both the terms of opposition, when he speaks to some, as having *turned from idols*, or *false Gods, to serve the living and true God*^r. Here we might consider the origin and progress of idolatry, as men were inclined to *worship the creature more than the creator*^s; or *to do service to them, who, by nature, are no Gods*^t; and shew how some seemed to have been destitute of common sense, as they were of true religion, when they not only worshipped God by idols, of their own making; but pray'd to them, and said, *Deliver us, for ye are our Gods*; this the prophet takes notice of^u, and exposes their unaccountable stupidity, by observing to them that these Gods were first growing among the trees of the forest, then cut down with their own hands, and fashioned into their designed form, and part thereof cast into the fire, as destined for common uses. These were lifeless gods, without a metaphor, and their senseless worshippers but one remove from them, as the Psalmist says, *They that make them are like unto them, and so is every one that trusteth in them*^x. But this we shall have occasion to insist on in a following part of this work^y, and therefore shall pass it over at present, and consider,

II. The Unity of the Godhead. Scripture is very express in asserting this:

thus it is said, *The Lord our God is one Lord*^z; and *I, even I, am he*; and *there is no God with me*^a; and *the Lord he is God*; *there is none else besides him*^b; and elsewhere, *Thou art God alone*^c. And this is a truth, not barely founded on a few places of scripture, that expressly assert it, but it may be deduced from every part thereof; yea, it is instamp'd on the very nature of man, and may be as plainly proved, from the light of nature, as that there is a God; and every one of the divine perfections, which were particularly considered under the *last Answer*, will supply us with arguments to confirm our faith therein: But, that this may farther appear, let it be considered,

1. That the *Idea* of a God implies, that he is the first cause of all things, in which respect he is opposed to the creature; it follows therefore, that he was from all eternity. Now there can be no more than one being, who is without beginning, and who gave being to all other things, which appears from the very nature of the thing; for if there are more Gods, then they must derive their being from him, and then they are a part of his creation, and consequently not Gods, for God and the creature are infinitely opposed to each other: and since there is but one independent being, who is in and of himself, and derives his perfections from no other, therefore there can be but one God.

2. There is but one Being, who is the ultimate end of all things, which necessarily follows from his being their Creator; for he that produced them out of nothing, must be supposed to have designed some valuable end hereby, which, ultimately considered, cannot be any thing short of himself, for that is inconsistent with the wisdom and sovereignty that is contained in the *Idea* of a Creator; therefore he is said to have *made all things for himself*^d; and consequently the glory that results from thence is unalienable, and so cannot be ascribed to any other God; therefore to suppose that there are other Gods, is to ascribe a divine nature to them, divested of that glory, which is essential to it. And to this we may add, that if God be the ultimate end of all things, he is to be glorified as such, and all worship is to terminate in him; and we must proclaim him to

^p Isai. xlix. 18. and Numb. xiv. 21.

^q Isai. xlv. 17.

^r Chap. iv. 35.

^s Psal. cxv. 8.

^t Psal. lxxxvi. 10.

^u Gen. xxii. 16.

^y See Quest. cv.

^z Prov. xvi. 4.

^a 1 Thess. i. 9.

^b Rom. i. 25.

^c Deut. vi. 4.

^d Gal. iv. 8.

^e Chap. xxxii. 39.

be our chief good, and only portion and happiness, which is plainly inconsistent with a plurality of Gods. Besides, he that is the object of adoration, must be worshipped, and *loved with all our heart, soul, strength and mind*^d; our affections must not be divided between him and any other. Therefore since man is under a natural obligation to give supreme worship to him, it follows that there is no other God that has a right to it; and therefore that he is the only true God.

3. Infinite perfection being implied in the *Idea* of a God, as has been proved under the *last Answer*, it is certain that it cannot belong to more than one; for as it implies that this perfection is boundless, so it denotes that he sets bounds to the perfections of all others; therefore if there are more Gods than one, their perfections must be limited, and consequently that which is not infinite, is not God. And as infinite perfection implies in it all perfection, so it cannot be divided among many, for then no being, that has only a part thereof, could be said to be thus perfect; therefore since there is but one that is so, it follows that there is no other God besides him.

4. Since omnipotency is a divine attribute, there can be but one almighty being, and therefore but one God; which will farther appear, if we consider, that if there were more Gods than one, all of them must be said to be able to do all things, and then the same individual power, that is exerted by one, must be exerted by another, than which nothing is more absurd. And it will also follow, that he who cannot do that which is said to be done by another, is not almighty, or able to do all things, and consequently that he is not God.

5. There is but one being, who has an absolute sovereign will, who, though he can controul all others, is himself subject to no controul; who has a natural right to give laws to all who are his subjects, but is subject to none himself; for absolute dominion and subjection are as opposite as light and darkness. Two persons may as well be said to give being to each other, as to have a right to give laws to each other. Moreover, if there were more Gods than one, then there would be a confusion in the government of the world; for whatever one decrees, another may re-

verse; or whatever is done by one, the contrary might be done by the other, for that is the consequence from a sovereignty of will. And as there might be opposite things commanded, or forbidden, pursuant to the different wills of a plurality of Gods; so the same thing, with respect to those who are under an obligation to yield obedience, would be both a sin and a duty, and the same persons would be both condemned and justified for the same action.

6. There is but one being, who is, as God is often said to be, the best and the greatest; therefore if there were more Gods than one, either one must be supposed to be more excellent than another, or both equally excellent. If we suppose the former of these, then he, who is not the most excellent, is not God; and if the latter, that their excellencies are equal, then infinite perfection would be divided, which is contrary to the *Idea* thereof, as was before hinted; as well as to what is expressly said by God, *To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One*^e. From these, and several other Arguments, to the same purpose, which might have been taken from every one of the divine attributes, and from all that essential and relative glory which belongs to him, the unity of the divine essence appears, even to a demonstration. And, indeed, to assert that there are more Gods than one, is, in effect, to say that there is no God; so the Apostle deems it, when he tells the church at *Ephesus*, that, before their conversion, when they worshipped other Gods, *they were without God in the world*, which implies as much as that they were Atheists therein, as the words may, with equal propriety, be rendered^f.

Having considered the unity of the Godhead, not only as evinced from scripture, but as it may be demonstrated by the light of nature, it will be necessary that we obviate an objection that may be brought against this latter method of proving it, *viz.*

Objection. If the unity of the Godhead might be known by the dictates of nature, or demonstrated by other arguments, besides those which are matter of pure revelation, how comes it to pass that the Heathen owned, and worshipped, a plurality of Gods? And it was not one particular sect among them that did so; but this abominable practice universally

^d Luke x. 27.

^e Isa. xl. 25.

^f Eph. ii. 12. ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

obtained, where revealed religion was not known; therefore, though this be an undoubted truth, yet it is not founded in the light of nature.

Anfw. That they did so, is beyond dispute, especially after idolatry had continued, a few ages, in the world, and so had extinguished those principles of revealed religion, which mankind, before this, were favoured with; yet it must be considered, that though the ignorant, and unthinking multitude among them, believed every thing to be a God, which the custom of the countries, where they lived, had induced them to pay divine adoration to; yet the wiser sort of them, however guilty of idolatry, by paying a lower kind of worship to them, have, notwithstanding, maintained the unity of the Godhead, or that there is one God superior to them all, whom they often call the Father of gods and men; to whom probably the *Athenians* erected that altar, as the Apostle *Paul* observes, with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD; because he says, in the words immediately following, *Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you*^f.

This appears, from what they assert to the same purpose, whereby they plainly discover their belief of but one supreme God, who has all the incommunicable perfections of the divine nature, however, in other instances, their conduct seemed to run counter to their method of reasoning: thus it appears, by their writings, that many of them assert that there is a God, who is the first cause, or beginning of all things; and that he was from eternity, or in the beginning, and that time took its rise from him; that he is the living God, the fountain of life, and the best of all beings^g. Also, that this God is self-sufficient, and therefore it is absurd to suppose that he stands in need of, or can receive advantage from any one^h; and that he is the chief good, or contains in himself whatever is good, and that by him all things consist; and that no one hath enough in himself to secure his own safety and happiness, which is to be derived from himⁱ.

And there are others also who plainly assert the unity of God, in as strong terms, as though they had learn'd it from divine revelation, calling him, the beginning, the end, and author of all things;

who was before, and is above all things; the Lord of all, the fountain of life, light, and all good, yea, goodness it self; the most excellent being; and many other expressions, to the like purpose. I could multiply quotations for the proof of this, from *Proclus*, *Porphry*, *Iamblicus*, *Plotinus*, *Plutarch*, *Epietetus*, and several others; but this has been already done by other hands^k; by which it appears, that though they mention other Gods, they suppose them to be little more than titular or honorary gods; or at least, persons who were the peculiar favourites of God, and admitted to the participation of divine honours, as well as employ'd in some part of the government of the world. They frequently speak of them, as having derived their being from God, whom they call, the cause of causes, the God of gods. Some of them speak of God in the singular number, throughout the greatest part of their writings, and only make mention of the gods occasionally, especially when they treat of those works that become a God, or the greatest honours that are due to him, thus *Seneca* and *Plato*; and, in particular, the latter of them says, concerning himself^l, that when he wrote any thing in a grave and serious manner, his custom was to preface his epistles with the mention of one God; though, it is true, when he wrote otherwise, he used the common mode of speaking, and talked of other gods; and it is observed, in his writings, that he sometimes uses this phrase; If it please God, or by the help of God, not the gods.

But, notwithstanding this, they were all idolaters, for they join'd in the rites of worship, performed to the false gods of their respective countries; yea, *Socrates* himself, who fell under the displeasure of the *Athenians*, for asserting the unity of the Godhead, which cost him his life, did not refuse to pay some religious honour to the heathen gods. So that it is plain they paid some religious worship to them, but it was of an inferior and subordinate nature, not much unlike to that which the Papists give to Saints and Angels: but they are far from setting them upon a level with God; for they confess they were but men, who formerly lived in this world; they give an account of their birth and parentage; where they lived and died; write the

^f Acts xvii. 23. Lib. II. Cap. 15.

Verit. Relig. Christian. Cap. 3.

^g See Arist. Metaphys. Lib. I. Cap. 2. & Lib. XII. Cap. 7.

ⁱ Vid. ejusd. De Moribus, Lib. IX. Cap. 4. & De Mundo, Cap. 6.

^l Epist. XIII. ad Dionys.

^h Vid. ejusd. Mag. Moral.

^k Vid. Mornæi de

98 Inferences from GOD's being the living and true GOD.

history of their lives, and what procured them the honour they suppose them after death advanced to^m; how some of them obtained it, as the reward of virtue, or in commemoration of the good they had done to the world in their life: as some were advanced to this honour, who were the inventors of arts, beneficial to mankind, or were successful in wars, or a publick blessing to the country where they lived. Others had this honour confer'd upon them, especially among the *Romans*, at the request of their surviving friends; and this was done after *Julius Cæsar's* time, by the decree of the senate, who, at the same time, when they rank'd them among the number of their gods, and appointed also the rites of worship that should be paid to them; and some of the *Roman* Emperors obliged the senate to deify them while they were alive. These things are very largely insisted on, by many ancient and modern writersⁿ; so that, upon the whole, it plainly appears, that whatever they say, of a plurality of gods, the wiser sort among the heathen did not deny the unity of the divine essence, in the highest and most proper sense; and, inasmuch as they received the knowledge hereof from the light of nature, we may from hence conclude that this truth might be known that way, as well as by divine revelation.

We shall conclude with some practical inferences from the doctrine contain'd in this *Answer*.

1. Since he, who is the object of our worship, is the living God; this reproves that lifeless formal way, in which many address themselves to him, in the performance of religious duties, without that reverence and due regard to the divine perfections, which are contain'd in this character of the Godhead. It is also a very great aggravation, not only of apostacy, but of any degree of backsliding, in those who have made a profession of religion; that it is a *departure from the living God*^o. Is he the God and giver of life, and shall we forsake him, who *has the words of eternal life*^p, whose sovereign will has the sole disposal thereof?

Again, this consideration of his being the living God, renders his judgments most terrible, and his wrath insupportable; as the Apostle says, *It is a fearful*

thing to fall into the hands of the living God^q.

2. From his being the true God, we infer, that all hypocrisy, both in heart and life, is to be avoided; and we should draw nigh to him with a true heart and faith unfeigned; and not like those whom the prophet reproves, when he says, *God was near in their mouth, and far from their reins*^r.

Moreover, let us take heed that we do not set up any idol in our hearts, in opposition to him as the true God: whatever has a greater share in our affections than God; or is set up in competition with him; that is, to us, a god, and is therefore inconsistent with our paying that regard which is due to him; as our Saviour says, *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*^s: and, upon this account, *covetousness* is stiled *idolatry*^t, as the world is loved more than him; and we read of some *whose god is their belly*^u; who make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, as though this was their chief good. And when we confide in any thing below him, in a religious way, or expect that from the creature which is only to be found in him; or when we esteem men as lords of our faith; or when his sovereignty, or right to govern us, is called in question, while we presumptuously, or wilfully, rebel against him; this is, in effect, a dethroning, or denying, him to be the true God: but more of this when we consider the sins forbidden in the first commandment^x.

3. From the unity of the Godhead, we may infer; that we ought to take heed that we do not entertain any conceptions of the divine Being, which are inconsistent herewith; therefore, as we are not to assert a plurality of gods, so we are not to think or speak of God in such a way, as tends to overthrow the simplicity of the divine nature; therefore we must not conceive that it is compounded of various parts, all which, being taken together, tend to constitute the divine essence; which gives occasion to that known aphorism, generally laid down by those who treat of this subject, that *whatever is in God, is God*; which we must reckon as one of the incomprehensibles of the divine Being, which, when we attempt to speak of, we only give an evident

^m See Cicero de Naturâ Deorum.

ⁿ See Tertull. Apol. Lactant. de falsâ Relig. Arnob. contra Gentes. Minut. Fel. Herodian. Hist. Lib. IV. See also *Mede's* Apostacy of the latter Times, Chap. 3, 4.

^o Heb. iii. 12.

^p John vi. 68.

^q Heb. x. 31.

^r Jer. xii. 2.

^s Matt. vi. 24.

^t Col. iii. 5.

^u Phil. iii. 19.

^x Quest. cv.

proof of the imperfection of our finite understandings, and that we cannot order our words by reason of darkness; however it is necessary, when we lay down this proposition, that we signify what we intend hereby, that so we may not be supposed to use words without *Ideas*; and especially that we may, in some measure, account for those modes of speaking, which are agreeable to scripture, which so often describes God, as having a plurality of perfections, and those, in some respects, distinct; and yet, at the same time, that we may not hereby be led to infer a plurality of Gods. Here let it be consider'd,

(1.) That we have not the least similitude, or resemblance, of this in any finite being. Every thing below God is composed of parts, some of which we call integral, as all the parts of matter taken together constitute the whole; others are called essential, as when we say an intelligent being has various powers or properties, which are essential to it; so that it would not be compleat without every one of them; and that these are all of them distinct, so that we cannot say whatever is in the soul of man is the soul, but every one of those powers, or properties, taken together, constitute the man; but this is by no means to be applied to the divine being; therefore,

(2.) When we conceive of God as holy, powerful, just, good, &c. we must not suppose that these perfections are so many ingredients in the divine being, or that, when taken together, they constitute it, as the whole is constituted of its parts; for then every one of them would have no other than a partial perfection, and consequently the essential glory of one of those attributes would not be equal to the glory of the divine being, which is supposed to consist of them all; and therefore there would be something in God less than God, or a divine perfection less than all the divine perfections taken together, which we are not to suppose. These are the properties of composition; and therefore when we speak of God, as a simple or uncompounded being, we cannot forbear to mention them, as what are inconsistent with his perfection as such.

Neither are the divine perfections distinct or different from one another, as the various parts of which the whole is constituted are said to be distinct, which follows from the former, since

the divine essence has no parts; therefore we are not to suppose, that the divine attributes considered, as they are in God, are so distinguished, as one thing, or being, is from another; or as wisdom, power, justice, mercy, &c. are in men; for that would be to suppose the divine being, as having several distinct, infinitely, perfect beings contained in it, which is contrary to its simplicity or unity; or, at least, if we call it one, it would be only so by participation and dependence, as a general or complex *Idea* is said to be one which partakes of, and depends on, all those particular or simple *Ideas* that are contained in it; or to illustrate it by numbers, as one hundred is one, as it contains such a number of units in it, as are, all taken together, equal to a hundred; this is not what we mean when we say God is one.

Moreover, when we speak of the divine perfections, as being in God, we suppose them all essential to him, as opposed to what is accidental. Now an accident is generally described, as what belongs, or is superadded, to a being or subject, which it might have existed without, or have been destitute of, and yet sustained no loss of that perfection, which is essential to it: thus wisdom, holiness, justice, faithfulness, are accidents in men; so that they who have them not, do not cease to be men, or to have the essential perfections of the human nature: But this is by no means to be applied to the divine being and attributes; for to suppose God to be destitute of any of them, is as much as to say that he is not infinitely perfect, or that he is not God. This, I think, is generally intended, when 'tis said, *whatever is in God, is God*; which, because it may be reckon'd by some to be a metaphysical speculation, I should have avoided to mention, had it not been, in some respects, necessary, since the unity of God cannot well be conceived of, unless his simplicity be defended; and I don't see how that can be well maintain'd, if this proposition be not duly consider'd. If I have used more words than are needful, or repeated the same *Ideas* too often, in attempting to explain it, I have done it to avoid some scholastick modes of speaking, or with a design to render what has been said more intelligible; but to this we may add,

(3.) That when we speak of the divine perfections, as many, or distinct from one another, as we often do, and have

have scripture warrant to justify us therein, namely, when we speak of the justice of God, as different from his mercy, or these from his power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c. this must not be deem'd inconsistent with what has been said concerning the divine simplicity, and therefore let it be consider'd; that the nature and perfections of God are incomprehensible; and therefore all the *Ideas* which we have of them, are taken from our comparing them with some small resemblance that there is thereof in intelligent creatures, and, at the same time, separating from them whatever argues imperfection^v.

And from hence it follows; that we are not supposed to know, or be able to describe what God is in himself, and, as I humbly conceive, never shall: such knowledge as this is too great for any but a divine person; therefore our conceptions of him are taken from, and conformed to those various ways, by which he condescends to make himself visible, or known to us, namely, by various acts conversant about certain objects, in which he is said to manifest his perfections: Thus when an effect is produced, we call that perfection that produces it, his power; or as the divine acts are otherwise distinguished with respect to the objects, or the manner of his glorifying himself therein, these we call his wisdom, justice, goodness, &c. And this is what we mean when we speak of various perfections in God; though some suppose that they express themselves more agreeably to the nature of the subject, or to the simplicity of God, in that, whenever they speak of any of the divine perfections, they speak of them in such a way, as that they are denominated from the effects thereof; as when they take occasion to mention the power of God, they call it God acting powerfully; or of his justice or faithfulness, they express those perfections by, God acting justly or faithfully^v. But however we express our selves, when we speak of the distinct perfections of the divine nature, this is what we principally intend thereby: And here our thoughts must stop, and make what is too great for a finite mind to conceive of, the subject of our admiration, and adore what we cannot comprehend; such knowledge is too wonderful for us; 'tis high, we cannot attain to it.

QUEST. IX. *How many Persons are there in the Godhead?*

ANSW. There be three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one, true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.

QUEST. X. *What are the personal properties of the three Persons in the Godhead?*

ANSW. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

QUEST. XI. *How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?*

ANSW. The scriptures manifest, that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father; ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

IN these three *Answers* is contained the doctrine of the *ever blessed Trinity*, which is a subject of pure revelation; and, because 'tis so much contested in the age in which we live, we are oblig'd to be more large and particular, in laying down the reasons of our belief of it, and, in our defence thereof, against those that deny it: 'Tis a doctrine that has been defended by some of the most judicious writers, both in our own and other nations; whereof some have prov'd that it was maintain'd by the church,

^v See Page 63. compared with Pages 53, 54.

^v See De Vries Exercitat. Rationalis

in the purest ages thereof, which therefore renders it less necessary for us to enter into that part of the controversy; but we shall principally insist on it, as founded on the sacred writings: and whereas others have render'd some parts of this doctrine more obscure, by confining themselves to the scholastick ways of speaking, we shall endeavour to avoid them, that so it may be better understood by private Christians; and the method we shall pursue in treating of it, shall be,

I. To premise some things which are necessary to be consider'd, with relation to it in general.

II. We shall consider in what sense we are to understand the words *Trinity*, and *Persons in the Godhead*, and in what respect the divine Persons are said to be One.

III. We shall prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have distinct personal properties, and therefore that we have sufficient reason to call them Persons in the Godhead, as they are in the first of these *Answers*; and under this head, shall consider what is generally understood by what is contained in the second of them; which respects the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost; and what cautions we are to use, lest, by mistaking the sense thereof, we be led into any error, derogatory to, or subversive of the doctrine of the Trinity; and also shall endeavour to explain those scriptures, which are generally brought to establish that doctrine.

IV. We shall endeavour to prove that these three Persons, especially the Son and Holy Ghost, are truly divine, or that they have all the perfections of the divine nature; and therefore that they are, in the most proper sense, the one only living and true God.

I. We shall premise some things, which are necessary to be considered, with relation to the doctrine of the Trinity in general. And,

1. 'Tis a doctrine of the highest importance, and necessary to be believed by all Christians, who pay a just deference to revealed religion. It may probably be reckon'd an error in method to speak of the importance of this doctrine, be-

fore we attempt to prove the truth thereof: however, it is not altogether unjustifiable, since we address our selves to those who believe it, hoping thereby to offer some farther conviction, or establishment, to their faith therein, as well as to others, who deny it; we may therefore be allowed to consider it as an important doctrine, that we may be excited to a more diligent enquiry into the force of some of those arguments, which are generally brought in its defence.

Now to determine a doctrine to be of the highest importance, we must consider the belief thereof, as connected with salvation, or subservient to that true religion, which is ordained by God, as a necessary means leading to it, without which we have no warrant to expect it: and such doctrines are sometimes called fundamental, as being the basis and foundation on which our hope is built. Here, I think, it will be allowed, by all whose sentiments do not favour of scepticism, that there are some doctrines of religion necessary to be believed to salvation. There are some, 'tis true, who plead for the innocency of error, or, at least, of those who are sincere enquirers after truth, who, in the end, will appear to have been very remote from it, as though their endeavours would entitle them to salvation, without the knowledge of those things, which others conclude to be necessarily subservient to it. All that we shall say concerning this, is, that it is not the sincerity of our enquiries, after important truths; but the success thereof that is to be regarded in this, as well as other means, that are to be used to obtain so valuable an end. We may as well suppose that our sincere endeavours to obtain many of those graces that accompany salvation; such as faith, love to God, and evangelical obedience, will supply, or atone, for the want of them; as to assert, that our unsuccessful enquiries after the great doctrines of religion, will excuse our ignorance thereof, especially when we consider; that blindness of mind, as well as hardness of heart, is included among those spiritual judgments, which are the consequence of our fallen state; and also that God displays the sovereignty of his grace, as much in leading the soul into all necessary truth, as it does in any other things that relate to salvation. However, it is not our business to determine the final state of men; or how far they make advances to; or recede from the knowledge of such important doctrines;

or what will be the issue thereof; but rather to desire of God, that so far as we, or others, are destitute of this privilege, he would grant us and them *repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*^a. And here we cannot but observe, that the question relating to important or fundamental articles of faith, is not, whether any doctrines may be so called? but, what those doctrines are? in determining of which, many make provision for their own particular scheme of doctrines: and accordingly some, as the Papists in particular, assert several doctrines to be fundamental, without scripture warrant; yea, such as are directly contrary thereunto; and others allow no doctrine to be so, but what will, if adhered to, open a door of salvation to all mankind, and these set aside the necessity of divine revelation; and others, who desire not to run such lengths, will allow, that some scripture-doctrines are necessary to be believed to salvation; but these are only such as may include those who are in their way of thinking: Thus they who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, are obliged, in conformity to their own sentiments, to deny also that it is an important article of faith. These may justly demand a convincing proof of the truth thereof, before they believe it to be of any importance, especially to themselves; and therefore it would be a vain thing to tell them, that the belief thereof is connected with salvation; or that it is necessary, inasmuch as divine worship is so, which supposes the belief of the divinity of the Persons, whom we adore, without first proving that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are divine Persons; and it would be as little to their edification to say that there are several doctrines necessary to be believed; such as that of Christ's satisfaction, and our justification, depending thereon, and that of regeneration and sanctification, as the effects of the divine power of the Holy Ghost; all which suppose the belief of their being divine Persons, unless we first gave some convincing proof of the truth of these doctrines, which are supposed to stand or fall with it; for it would be immediately replied, that one is false, and consequently far from being of any importance, therefore so is the other.

But inasmuch as we reserve the consideration of these things to their proper place; we shall only observe, at present, that there are some who do not appear

to deny the doctrine of the Trinity; but rather the importance of it, and express themselves with very great indifference about it, and blame all attempts to defend it, as needless, or litigious, as tho' it were only a contest about words: thus they say though we hold it ourselves, others who deny it, may have as much to say in defence of their own cause as we have, and therefore that these disputes ought to be wholly laid aside. Now, with respect to these, what we have hinted, concerning the importance of this doctrine, may not be altogether misapplied; therefore we have taken occasion to mention it in this place, that we may not be supposed to plead a cause, which is not worth defending, as though the doctrine of the Trinity were no other than an empty speculation; but as that which we are bound to esteem a doctrine of the highest importance.

2. We are next to consider what degree of knowledge of this doctrine is necessary to, or connected with salvation. It cannot be supposed that this includes in it the knowledge of every thing that is commonly laid down in those writings, wherein it is attempted to be explain'd; for when we speak of this, as a doctrine of the highest importance, we mean the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity. This is what we are to assent to, and to use our utmost endeavours to defend; but as for those explications, which are merely human, they are not to be reckon'd of equal importance; especially, every private Christian is not to be censured as a stranger to this doctrine, who cannot define personality in a scholastick way, or understand all the terms used in explaining it, or several modes of speaking, which some writers tenaciously adhere to; such as hypostasis, subsistence, consubstantiality, the modal distinction of the Persons in the Godhead, filiation, or the communication of the divine essence by generation, or its being farther communicated by procession; some of which rather embarrass the minds of men, than add any farther light to the sense of those scriptures, in which this doctrine is contain'd.

But when we consider how far the doctrine of the Trinity is to be known, and believed to salvation, we must not exclude the weakest Christian from a possibility of knowing it, by supposing it necessary for him to understand some hard words, which he doth not find in his bible; and

if he meets with them elsewhere, will not be much edified by them. That knowledge therefore, which is necessary to salvation, is more plain and easy, and to be found in every part of scripture: Accordingly, every Christian knows, that the word *God* signifies a Being that has all those divine perfections, which are so frequently attributed to him therein, and are display'd and glorified in all his works of common providence and grace; and that this God is one. To which we may also add, that he learns from his bible, and therefore firmly believes that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are possess'd of these divine perfections, and consequently that they are this one God; and that they are distinguished, as we often find in scripture, by such characters and properties, which we generally call personal, and so apply the word *Person* to each of them, and conclude that the divine glory attributed to them is the same, though their personal properties, or characters, are distinct, which is the substance of what is contained in the first of those *Answers*, under our present consideration. And he that believes this, need not entertain any doubt as though he wanted some *Ideas* of this sacred doctrine, which are necessary to salvation; since such a degree of knowledge, attended with a firm belief thereof, is sufficient to warrant all those acts of divine worship, which we are obliged to ascribe to the Father, Son, and Spirit, and is consistent with all those other doctrines, which are founded on, or suppose the belief thereof, as was before observed under our *last Head*.

3. We shall consider this doctrine as a great mystery, such as cannot be comprehended by a finite mind; and therefore we shall first enquire what we are to understand by the word *Mystery*, as it is used in scripture. This word sometimes denotes a doctrine's having been kept secret, or, at least, revealed more obscurely, upon which account it was not so clearly known before; in which sense the gospel is called, *The mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints*^b. It was cover'd with the ceremonial law, as with a vail, which many of the people, through the blindness of their minds, did not so fully understand; and accordingly when persons are led into a farther degree of knowledge thereof, it is said, as our Saviour tells his

disciples, that to them it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven^c; or when something is revealed in scripture, which the world was not in the least apprised of before; this is, by way of eminence, call'd a mystery, as the Apostle says, speaking concerning the change that shall be pass'd on those that shall be found alive at the last day; *Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*^d.

But to this we may add, that there is also another *Idea* affix'd to the word *Mystery*, namely, that though it be reveal'd, yet it cannot be fully comprehended; and it is in this sense that we call the doctrine of the Trinity a *Mystery*. Both these *Ideas* seem to be contained in the word, in some scriptures, particularly where the Apostle says, *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God*^e; where he speaks of the gospel, not only as hid, but unsearchable; and he speaks of the mystery of God, even the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge^f; where the word *Mystery* seems to contain both these *Ideas*; for few will deny that the glory of the Father, who is here spoken of, as well as Christ, is incomprehensible by a finite mind; and if it be said that the gospel is hereby intended, and so that the words ought to be render'd, *in which* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; this must be supposed to be incomprehensible, as well as formerly less known, otherwise this character of it would be too great.

But suppose the word *Mystery* were always used to signify a doctrine, not before revealed, without the other *Idea* of its being incomprehensible contained in it; this would not overthrow our argument in general, since we can prove it to be incomprehensible from other arguments, which we shall endeavour to do.

And that we may prepare our way for this, let it be consider'd, that there are some finite things which we cannot now comprehend, by reason of the imperfection of our present state, which are not incomprehensible, in themselves. How little do we know of some things,

^b Coloss. i. 26.

^c Matt. xiii. 35.

^d 1 Cor. xiv. 21, 22.

^e Eph. iii. 8, 9.

^f Coloss. ii. 3.

which

which may be called mysteries in nature; such as the reason of the growth and variety of colours and shapes of plants; the various instincts of brute creatures; yea, how little do we know comparatively of our selves, the nature of our souls, any otherwise, than as it is observed by their actions, and the effects they produce; the reason of their union with our bodies, or of their acting by them, as the inspired writer observes; so that it may well be said, *Thou knowest not the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all things*^f; and *Elihu*, together with some of the other wonderful works of nature, which he challengeth *Job* to give an account of, speaks of this in particular, *Dost thou know how thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth, by the south wind*^g? which not only signifies that we cannot account for the winds producing heat or cold, as blowing from various quarters of heaven; but that we know not the reason of the vital heat, which is preserved, for so many years, in the bodies of men, the inseparable concomitant and sign of life; or what gives the first motion to the blood and spirits, or fits the organized body to perform its various functions. These things cannot be comprehended by us.

But if we speak of that which is infinite, we must conclude it to be incomprehensible, not only because of the imperfection of our present state, but because, as has been before observ'd^h, of the infinite disproportion that there is between the object and our finite capacities. In this respect we have before shewn that the perfections of the divine nature cannot be comprehended, such as the immensity, eternity, omnipresence, and simplicity of God; yet we are to believe that he is thus infinitely perfect. And it seems equally reasonable to suppose the doctrine of the Trinity to be incomprehensible for the mutual relation of the Father, Son and Spirit, to each other, and their distinct personality are not the result of the divine will; these are personal perfections, and therefore they are necessary, and their glory infinite, as well as that of his essential perfections; and if we are bound to believe one to be incomprehensible, why should we not as well suppose the other to be so? or if there are some things which the light of nature gives us some

Ideas of, concerning which we are notwithstanding bound to confess that we know but little of them, for the reason but now mentioned, why should it be thought strange, that this doctrine, tho' the subject of pure revelation, should be equally incomprehensible? This consequence appears so evident, that some of them, who deny the doctrine of the Trinity to be incomprehensible, don't stick to deny the perfections of the divine nature to be so, when they maintain that there is nothing which is the object of faith but what may be comprehended by us, which is to run such lengths in defence of their cause, as no one who hath the least degree of that humility, which becomes a finite creature, should venture to do. But they proceed yet farther, as the cause they defend seems to require it, and say, that every doctrine which we cannot comprehend is to be rejected by us, as tho' our understandings were to set bounds to the truth and credibility of all things.

This, I think, is the true state of the question about mysteries in Christianity: it is not whether the word *Mystery* is never used in scripture to signify what is incomprehensible, for if that could be sufficiently proved, which I think hath not yet been done, we would assert the doctrine of the Trinity to be more than a mystery, namely, an incomprehensible doctrine: and the proof thereof seems absolutely necessary, since the Anti-trinitarians, and some of them, with an air of insult, conclude this to be our last resort which we betake our selves to when they have beaten us out of all our other strong-holds; and therefore we may suppose, that this would be opposed with the greatest warmth, but I don't find that it has hitherto been overthrown: and indeed when they call it one of our most plausible pretences, as tho' we laid the whole stress of the controversy upon it, it might be expected that it should be attacked with stronger arguments than it generally is. Sometimes they bend their force principally against the sense of the word *Mystery*; and here they talk not only with an air of insult, but profaneness, when they compare it with the abominable mysteries of the heathen, which were not to be divulged to any but those of them who were in the secret; and the doctrine of the Trinity, and that of Transubstantiation are compared together, so that they are to be reckoned equally

^f Eccles. xi. 5.^g Job xxxvii. 17, &c.^h See Page 63.

mysterious, that is, according to their application of the word, absurd and nonsensical. And this way of arguing has so far prevailed among them, that no one must apply the word to any doctrines of religion without exposing himself to scorn and ridicule; but this will do no service to their cause, nor prejudice to our doctrine, in the opinion of those who enquire into the truth thereof, with that seriousness and impartiality, that the importance of the doctrine calls for.

The question therefore in controversy is; whether any doctrines of religion may be deemed incomprehensible, that is, such as we can have no adequate *Ideas* of, because of the disproportion between them and our finite minds? and whether the incommunicable perfections of God are not to be reckoned among these incomprehensible doctrines? if they are not, then it will be reasonable to demand that every thing relating to them be particularly accounted for, and reduced to the standard of a finite capacity; and if this cannot be done, but some things must be allowed to be incomprehensible in religion, then it will be farther enquired; why should the doctrine of the Trinity be rejected, because we cannot account for every thing that relates to the personal glory of God, any more than we can for those things that respect his essential glory? or may not some things, that are matter of pure revelation, be supposed to exceed our capacities, and yet we be bound to believe them, as well as other things, which appear to be true, and, at the same time, incomprehensible, by the light of nature? But that we may enter a little more particularly into this argument, we shall consider the most material objections that are brought against it, and what may be replied to them.

Object. 1. It is objected that we take up with the bare sound of words, without any manner of *Ideas* affixed to them. And,

2. That it is unbecoming the divine wisdom and goodness to suppose that God should give a revelation, and demand our belief thereof, as necessary to salvation, when, at the same time, it is impossible for our understandings to yield an assent to it, since nothing that is unintelligible can be the object of faith.

3. That practical religion is designed to be promoted in the world hereby, and therefore the will of man must follow the dictates of the understanding, and

not blindly embrace, and be conversant about we know not what, which is to act unbecoming our own character, as intelligent creatures.

4. That the design of divine revelation is to improve our understandings, and render our *Ideas* of things more clear, and not to entangle and perplex them.

Ans. 1. As to our using words without *Ideas*, there is no Christian, that I know of, who thinks there is any religion in the sound of words, or that it is sufficient for us to take up with the word *Trinity*, or *Persons* in the Godhead, without determining, in some measure, what we understand thereby. We will therefore allow that faith supposes some *Ideas* of the object, namely, that we have some knowledge of what we believe it to be: now our knowledge of things admits of various degrees; some of which we only know that they are what they are determined, or proved to be, if we proceed farther in our enquiries, and would know how every thing is to be accounted for, that may justly be affirmed concerning them, here our *Ideas* are at a stand; yet this is not in the least inconsistent with the belief of what we conclude them to be. For the illustrating of which, let it be consider'd, that we believe that God's eternity is without succession, his immensity without extension; this we know and believe, because to assert the contrary, would be to ascribe imperfection to him. In this respect, our faith extends as far as our *Ideas*: but as for what exceeds them, we are bound to believe that there is something in God, which exceeds the reach of a finite mind, though we cannot comprehend, or fully describe it, as tho' it was not infinite. And to apply this to the doctrine of the Trinity; it is one thing, to say that the Father, Son, and Spirit, have the perfections of the divine nature attributed to them in scripture, as well as distinct personal characters and properties, and, because the Godhead is but one, that therefore these three are one, which we firmly believe, inasmuch as it is so clearly reveal'd in scripture; and another thing, to say that we can fully describe all the properties of their divine personality, which, though we cannot do, yet we believe that they subsist in an incomprehensible manner. And while we compare them with finite persons, as we do the perfections of God with those of the creature, we separate from the one, as

well as the other, whatever favours of imperfection.

2. As to the unintelligibleness of divine revelation, and its being unbecoming the wisdom and goodness of God to communicate those doctrines that are so, it may be replied; that we must distinguish between the rendering a doctrine, which would be otherwise easy to be understood unintelligible; by the perplexity or difficulty of the stile, in which 'tis deliver'd, and the imparting a doctrine which none can comprehend; the former of these cannot be charged on any part of scripture, and 'tis only a revelation, which is liable to such a charge that could be reckon'd inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God. As to the latter, the design of revelation is not to make us comprehend what is in it self incomprehensible: As, for instance, God did not design, when he made known his perfections in his word, to give us such a perfect discovery of himself, that we might be said hereby to find him out unto perfection, or that we should know as much of his glory as is possible to be known, or as much as he knows of it himself; for that is to suppose the understanding of man infinitely more perfect than it is. Whatever is received, is received in proportion to the measure of that which contains it; the whole ocean can communicate no more water than what will fill the vessel, that is, to contain it. Thus the infinite perfections of God being such as cannot be contained in a finite mind; we are not to suppose that our comprehending them was the design of divine revelation; God, indeed, designed hereby that we should apprehend some things of himself, namely, as much as should be subservient to the great ends of religion; but not so much as might be inconsistent with our humble confession, that *we are but of yesterday, and know, comparatively, nothing*¹.

And this is applicable, not only to the essential, but the personal glory of God, *Who hath ascended into heaven, or descended? Who hath gather'd the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou can'st tell*^k? Our Saviour, indeed, speaks of his having *ascended into heaven*^l, as having a comprehensive knowledge of all divine truths; but this he affirms concerning himself, as

a divine person, exclusively of all creatures.

Moreover, when 'tis said, in this objection, that God makes the comprehensive knowledge of these things a term of salvation, this we must take leave to deny; and we need not add any more as to that head, since we have already consider'd what degree of knowledge is necessary thereunto, namely, such as is subservient to religion, which teaches us to adore what we apprehend to be the object thereof, though we cannot comprehend it.

As to that part of the objection, that that which is unintelligible, is not the object of faith, we must distinguish before we grant or deny it; therefore since the object of faith is some proposition laid down, 'tis one thing to say that a proposition cannot be assented to, when we have no *Ideas* of what is affirm'd or deny'd in it; and another thing to say that 'tis not to be believed, when we have *Ideas* of several things contained therein, of which some are affirm'd, and others deny'd; as, for instance, when we say God is an infinite Spirit, there is a positive *Idea* contain'd in that proposition, or some things affirm'd therein, *viz.* that he is able to put forth actions suitable to an intelligent being; and there is something deny'd concerning him, to wit, his being corporeal; and in concluding him to be an infinite Spirit, we deny that there are any limits of his understanding; all this we may truly be said to understand and believe: But if we proceed farther, and enquire what 'tis to have such an understanding, or will? this is not a proposition, and consequently not the object of faith, as well as exceeds the reach of our understanding. So as to the doctrine of the Trinity, when we affirm that there is one God, and that the Father, Son, and Spirit, have all the perfections of the Godhead; and that these perfections, and the personality of each of them, are infinitely greater than what can be found in the creature, this we yield our assent to; but if it be enquired how far does God herein exceed all the *Ideas* which we have of finite perfections, or personality, here our understandings are at a loss; but so far as this does not contain the form of a proposition, it cannot, according to our common acceptance of the word, be said to be the object of faith.

¹ Job viii. 9.

^k Prov. xxx. 4.

^l John iii. 13.

3. As to what concerns practical religion, the *Ideas* we have of things subservient to it are of two sorts; either such as engage our obedience; or excite our adoration and admiration: As to the *former* of these, we know what we are commanded to do; what it is to act, as becomes those who are subject to a divine person, though we cannot comprehend those infinite perfections, which lay us under the highest obligations to obey him: As to the *latter*, the incomprehensibleness of the divine personality, or perfections, has a direct tendency to excite our admiration, and the infiniteness thereof our adoration. And, since all religion may be reduced to these two heads, the subject matter of divine revelation is so far from being inconsistent with it, that it tends to promote it. Things commanded are not, as such, incomprehensible, as was but now observed, and therefore not inconsistent with that obedience, or subjection, which is contained in one branch thereof; and things incomprehensible do not contain the form of a command, but rather excite our admiration, and therefore they are not only consistent with, but adapted to promote the other branch thereof. Is it not an instance of religion to adore and magnify God, when we behold the display of his perfections in his works? And is he less to be adored, or admired, because we cannot comprehend them? Or should we not rather look upon them with a greater degree of astonishment, than if they did not exceed the reach of a finite mind? Must a person be able to measure the water of the ocean, or number all the particles of matter, that are contain'd in the world; or can our *Ideas* be no ways directed to shew forth the creator's praise? Or must we be able to account for every thing that is a mystery in nature; or can we not improve it to promote some of the ends of practical religion, that we are engaged to thereby? May we not say, with wonder, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches*^m? So when we behold the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as display'd in the work of redemption, or as contain'd in scripture, which is therein said to be an instance of his *manifest wisdom*ⁿ, should we not admire it the more, inasmuch as 'tis, as the Apostle calls it, unsearchable? Therefore practical religion, as founded on divine revela-

tion, is not, in all the branches thereof, inconsistent with the incomprehensibleness of those things, which are, some in one respect, and others in another, the objects thereof.

And as to what is farther contained in this objection, concerning the will's following the dictates of the understanding, and practical religion's being seated therein, I own, that we must first know what we are to do in matters of religion, before we can act; thus we must first know what 'tis to worship, love, and obey, the Father, Son, and Spirit, as also that these three divine persons are the object of worship, love, and obedience, and then the will follows the dictates of the understanding; but 'tis one thing to know these things, and another thing to be able to comprehend the divine, essential, or personal glory, which belongs to them, and is the foundation of these acts of religious worship.

4. As to what is farther objected, concerning the design of divine revelation's being to improve our understanding; or, as 'tis sometimes express'd, that 'tis an improvement upon the light of nature; this seems to have a double aspect, or tendency, *viz.* to advance, or depreciate divine revelation.

1. If we take it in the former view, we freely own,

(1.) That 'tis a very great improvement upon the light of nature, and that, either as we are led hereby, not only into the knowledge of many things, which could not be discover'd by it, namely, the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and that infinite satisfaction which was given by him to the justice of God, in order to our discharge from condemnation, as also that communion, which believers have with the Father, Son, and Spirit; and therefore since the light of nature gives us no discovery of these doctrines, divine revelation, and particularly the gospel, makes a very great addition to those *Ideas*, which we are led into by the light of nature. 'Tis true, they both take their rise from God, yet one excels the other, as much as the light of the sun does that of a star; and is, as the Psalmist says, when comparing them together, *perfect, converting the soul; and sure, making wise the simple*^o.

(2.) That when the same truths are discover'd by the light of nature, and by divine revelation, the latter tends very much to improve our *Ideas*: thus when

^m Psal. civ. 24.

ⁿ Eph. iii. 10.

^o Psal. xix. 7.

the light of nature leads us into the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, his wisdom, power, and goodness, as illustrated in the works of nature and providence, we have not so clear *Ideas* thereof, as we receive from the additional discoveries of them in divine revelation, and, in this respect, one does not cloud or darken those *Ideas* which the other gives; but neither of these are designed by those who bring this objection against the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore we must suppose,

2. That they intend hereby to depreciate divine revelation, and then the sense thereof is this; that tho' the light of nature leads mankind into such a degree of the knowledge of divine truths, as is sufficient, in its kind, to salvation; so that they, who are destitute of divine revelation, may thereby understand the terms of acceptance with God, and the way which, if duly improved, would lead to heaven; yet God was pleased to give some farther discovery of the same things by his word, and, in this sense, the one is only an improvement upon the other, as it makes the same truths, which were known, in some degree, without it, more clear, and frees them from those corruptions, or false glosses, which the perverse reasonings of men have set upon them; whereas we, by insisting on inexplicable mysteries, which we pretend to be founded on divine revelation, though, in reality, they are not contained in it, cloud and darken that light, and so make the way of salvation more difficult, than it would otherwise be; and this certainly tends to depreciate divine revelation, how plausible soever the words, at first view, may appear to be, for it supposes those doctrines, but now mention'd, and many others of the like nature, not necessary to salvation; so that this objection takes its first rise from the Deists, however, it may be applied, by the Anti-trinitarians, in militating against the doctrine of the Trinity. Therefore since 'tis principally design'd to overthrow this doctrine, by supposing it to be unintelligible, and consequently according to their method of reasoning, in no sense the object of faith, the only reply which need be made to it is, that the discoveries of the glory of God, by the light of nature, are, in some respects, as incomprehensible as the doctrine of the Trinity, which we are not, for that reason, obliged to disbelieve, or reject; and therefore there is no advantage gain'd

against our argument, by supposing that the light of nature contains a discovery of truths, plain, easy, and intelligible by all, in the full extent thereof, and that the doctrine of the Trinity is otherwise, and consequently must not be contain'd in divine revelation, and, as such, cannot be defended by us.

4. Another thing that may be premised, before we enter on the proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, is, that it is not contrary to reason, though it be above it; neither are our reasoning powers, when directed by scripture-revelation, altogether useless, in order to our attaining such a degree of the knowledge thereof, as is necessary, and ought to be endeavour'd after. When a doctrine may be said to be above reason, has been already consider'd, as well as that the *Doctrine of the Trinity* is so; and now we are obliged to obviate an objection, which is the most popular one of any that is brought against it, namely, that it is an absurd and irrational doctrine; and that they who maintain it must first lay aside their reason, before they can be induced to believe it, for it is as much as to say that three are equal to one; which is contrary to the common sense of all mankind, or else that we maintain a plurality of Gods, which is contrary to the very first principles of the light of nature. And here we are reflected on, as though we demanded that our antagonists should lay aside their reason, before we argue with them, and then it is easy to determine on which side the argument will turn; therefore, to make way for what might be said in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall, under this head, consider,

(1.) When a doctrine may be said to be contrary to reason.

(2.) Shew that the doctrine of the Trinity is not so.

(3.) What is the use of reason, in establishing it, or any other doctrines, which are the subject of pure revelation.

(1.) When we may conclude, that a doctrine is contrary to reason. This it may be said to be, when it is contrary to the methods of reasoning, made use of by particular persons, which are not always just, and therefore it does not follow, from hence, that it is false or absurd, because our reasoning about it is so, but rather the contrary; so that when they, on the other side of the question, tell us, with an air of boasting, that if the doctrine we are maintaining could have been

been accounted for, how comes it to pass that so many men of sense and learning, as are to be found among the Antitrinitarians, have not been able to do it? But this is nothing to our present argument; therefore we suppose a doctrine, contrary to reason, when it contradicts some of the first principles, which the mind of man cannot but yield its assent to, as soon as ever it takes in the sense of the words which contain them, without demanding any proof thereof; as that the whole is greater than the part; and that a thing cannot be, and not be, at the same time; or that two is more than one, &c. or when we can prove a thing to be true to a demonstration, and yet suppose that a contradictory proposition, in which the words are taken in the same sense, may be equally true.

(2.) That the doctrine of the Trinity is not contrary to reason. This appears, inasmuch as we do not say that the three Persons in the Godhead are one Person, or that the one divine Being is three divine Beings.

Object. But it is objected, that it is contrary to reason, which establishes and proves the unity of the Godhead, to say that the divine nature may be predicated of more than one, inasmuch as that infers a plurality of Gods, and every distinct Person must be concluded to be a distinct God; therefore the Trinitarian doctrine is down-right Tritheism, and consequently contrary to reason; and here those words of the *Athanasian Creed* are produced, as an instance hereof, namely, that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God; so, that the Father is Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Ghost Eternal, yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal; and the Father Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty, yet are there not three Almighties, but one Almighty. This they suppose, though without ground, to be a plain contradiction.

Answer. But to this it may be replied, that when we say the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are God, we do not say they are distinct Gods, for the distinction between them respects their personality, not their deity; and when we assert that they are all Eternal, or Almighty, we do not suppose that their duration, or power, are distinct; and the same may be said of all other divine perfections that are attributed to them, the perfections

are the same in all of them, though the persons are distinct. So that the charge of Tritheism lies in a narrow compass: they say that there is one divine being, so do we; and to this they add, that this divine being is a divine person, since existence and personality are the same; therefore if there are more divine Persons, there must be more Gods; this consequence they maintain, but we deny. But how do they prove it? The proof amounts to no more than this; that there is no instance in finite things, when we speak of angels or men, to whom alone personality can be applied, of any distinct persons, but, at the same time, their beings are distinct; therefore it must be so with respect to the divine Persons. This we are bound to deny, since our *Ideas* of personality and existence are not the same; therefore, how inseparable soever they may be in what respects creatures, we may have distinct *Ideas* of them, when we speak of the divine being, and personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Here it will, doubtless, be demanded, that we determine wherein the difference consists; or, in particular, since every distinct finite Person is a distinct being, what there is in the divine personality, that should exclude the Father, Son, and Spirit, from being distinct beings, because distinct Persons; so that when we conclude that there is a small, or faint resemblance between divine and human personality, we must be able to comprehend, and fully to describe, that infinite disproportion that is between them, or else must be charged with using words without any manner of *Ideas* annexed to them, and so our Cause must fall to the ground. If, indeed, the divine personality were finite, like that of the creature, then it might be required that a finite mind should account for it: but since it is not so, but incomprehensible, we are bound to believe what we cannot comprehend.

But have we no *Ideas* at all of the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit? To this we may answer; that we have finite *Ideas* thereof, and more than these we have not of any of the divine perfections. We are taught, by scripture, to say that they are distinct Persons; and we know what those personal characters, or properties, from whence our *Ideas* take their rise, signify, when applied to men; but, at the same time, abstract, in our thoughts, every thing from them that argues imperfection, or,

in short, our conceptions hereof, proceed in the same way, as when we think of any of the perfections of the divine nature: these, as well as the divine personality, are equally incomprehensible; yet, while we say they are infinitely more than can be in any creature, we, notwithstanding, retain such *Ideas* of them, as tend to answer those ends of religion, which suppose that we apprehend something of them that is conducive hereunto. We are now to consider,

(3.) The use of reason in proving or defending the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other doctrines of pure revelation. They could not, indeed, have been at first discovered by reason, nor can every thing that is revealed be comprehended by it, yet our reason is not to be laid aside as useless; therefore some call it a servant to faith. Thus revelation discovers what doctrines we are to believe, demands our assent to them, and reason offers a convincing proof, that we are under an indispensable obligation to give it: it proves the doctrine to be true, and such as is worthy of God, as it is derived from him, the fountain of truth and wisdom; and this office of reason, or the subserviency thereof to our faith, is certainly necessary, since what is false cannot be the object of faith in general; and nothing unworthy of God can be the matter of divine revelation, nor consequently the object of a divine faith.

Now, in order to reason's judging of the truth of things, it first considers the sense of words; what *Ideas* are designed to be convey'd thereby, and whether they are contrary to the common sense of mankind; and if it appears that they are not, it proceeds to enquire into those evidences that may give conviction, and enforce our belief thereof; and leads us into the nature of the truths revealed, receives them as instamped with the authority of God, and considers them as agreeable to his perfections, and farther leads us into his design of revealing them, and what we are to infer from them; and, in doing this, it connects things together, observes the dependence of one thing on another, what is the importance thereof, and how they are to be improved to answer the best purposes.

Now this may be applied particularly to the doctrine of the Trinity; for it contains in it no absurdity contradictory to reason, as has been already proved;

and the evidences on which our faith herein is founded, will be farther consider'd, when we prove it to be a scripture doctrine, by the express words thereof, agreeable to the mind of the Holy Ghost, or by just consequences deduced from it; by which it will farther appear, that it is necessary for us to use our reason in stating those doctrines, which are neither founded on, nor can be comprehended by it.

5. We are now to consider from whence the doctrine of the Trinity is to be deduced, or where we are to search for that knowledge thereof, which we are to acquiesce in. And here it must be observed, that it cannot be learnt from the light of nature, for then we should certainly be able to behold some traces, or footsteps, thereof, in the works of creation and providence, that so this might be understood thereby, as well as the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, as the cause is known by its effect; but we should never have known that God made all things by his essential word, *without whom nothing was made that was made*, as the Evangelist speaks^p, had we not received this doctrine from divine revelation: Likewise we should never have known that the Spirit, as a distinct Person from the Father, created all things, and perform'd several other works, by which his personal glory is demonstrated, had we not received the account, which we have thereof, from scripture. The light of nature could discover to us, indeed, that God, who is a Spirit, or incorporeal Being, has produced many effects worthy of himself; but we could not have known hereby, that the word *Spirit* signifies a distinct person, which we are beholden to divine revelation for.

And as for the work of our redemption, in which, more than in all the other divine works, the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is demonstrated, we could have known as little of that, by the light of nature, as we do of the Persons to whom it is attributed. But I am sensible that it will be objected to this,

Object. 1. That our first parents knew the doctrine of the Trinity, as soon as they were created, otherwise they could not have given that distinct glory to the Persons in the Godhead that is due to them; and if we are required, not only to worship the divine Being, but to worship the Father, Son, and Spirit; and,

^p John i. 3.

The TRINITY not known by the Light of Nature. 111

if this worship is due from us, as creatures, and not merely as fallen and redeem'd; then it will follow from hence, that our first parents must know the doctrine of the Trinity: But this they did not know by divine revelation; therefore they knew it by the light of nature.

Ans. We will allow every thing contained in this objection, excepting that they did not know this by divine revelation; for certainly they had some *Ideas* convey'd this way at first, otherwise they could not have known any thing that related to instituted worship, which, it is plain, they did. And shall it be reckon'd any absurdity to suppose that they received this doctrine of the Trinity by divine revelation, though we have no particular account thereof, in that short history which *Moses* gives us of things relating to the state of innocency? It is therefore sufficient to our purpose, to suppose that it was agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God to make known to them this important truth, and that consequently that he did so, though not by the light of nature.

Object. 2. It is farther objected; that the Heathen knew something of the doctrine of the Trinity, as appears by their writings, though they were unacquainted with scripture. To support this objection, they refer to several mystical expressions in the works of *Plato*, which seem to look that way, when he speaks of three principles; one whereof he calls goodness, or a being that is good; the second he calls his word, or reason; and the third a Spirit, which diffuses its influence throughout the whole system of beings, and calls him sometimes the soul of the world; and, in other places, he speaks of them, as having a distinct sovereignty^a. And he supposes the first of these to be the cause of things most great and excellent; the second, the cause of things of an inferior nature; the third, of things yet more inferior; and some of his followers plainly call them three hypostases; and sometimes, Father, Word, and Spirit.

Ans. The account which *Plato*, and his followers, seem to have given of the doctrine of the Trinity, does not appear to have been taken from the light of nature, and therefore this makes nothing to the objection. We have sufficient ground to conclude that *Plato* travell'd into *Egypt*, with a design to make im-

provements in knowledge; and, some suppose, that there he saw some translation of a part of the Bible into *Greek*, more ancient than that which is commonly attributed to the LXX, which was not compiled till a hundred years after his time; but whether he did this, or no, is uncertain: 'Tis true, he used several expressions, which are contained in the books of *Moses*, and took the plan of his laws from thence; upon which account some have called him a second *Moses*, speaking *Greek*: but whether he received his notions more immediately from scripture, or by conversation with the *Jews*, of whom a great number settled in *Egypt*, after *Gedaliab's* death, is not material; however, it is sufficiently evident, that he had not all of them, in a way of reasoning, from the light of nature: And as for his followers, such as *Plotinus*, *Proclus*, *Porphery*, and others, they lived in those ages, when Christianity prevailed in the world, though none of them pretended to be Christians; and one of them was the most inveterate enemy to Christianity that lived; yet these might well be supposed to make their master *Plato* speak several things, as to this mystery, which he never intended, were it only to persuade the Christians to believe that he was not inferior to *Moses*, or any other recorded in scripture.

Thus having answer'd the objections, we shall take leave to consider how unwarily some divines, who have defended the doctrine of the Trinity, have not only asserted that *Plato* understood a great deal of it, but have made use of this, as an answer to the Anti-trinitarian objection before mention'd, that the doctrine of the Trinity is unintelligible; and they have taken a great deal of pleasure in accounting for this doctrine, in such a way as these philosophers have done^c: And some of them have taken notice of a few dark hints, which they have met with in some of the poetical fictions, and from thence concluded that there was something of the Trinity known, even by the Heathen in general. Thus when the word *Three* is mention'd by them, and applied to some things, which they relate concerning their Gods; or when they speak of Gods delighting in an unequal number, or in the number *Three*: But this is too gross to be particularly mentioned, least it should give

^a Vid. Epist. 2. ad Dionys. & Fid. Lib. II. cap. 3.

^b Vid. Euseb. Prep. Evang. Lib. XIII. cap. 12.

^c Vid. Huet. Concord. Ration.

112 *The TRINITY not to be illustrated by Similitudes.*

usan unbecoming *Idea* of this divine mystery, or of those who have better arguments than these to defend it.

The reflection which I would make on this is, that what they call an advantage to the doctrine, has been certainly very detrimental to it; and, as a late learned divine observes, has tended only to pervert the simplicity of the Christian faith with mixtures of philosophy and vain deceit. And I doubt not but the Apostle had an eye to this, among other corruptions, which they, who were attached to the Heathen philosophy, began to bring into their scheme of divinity, and would notoriously do in after-ages, which he purposely fences against, when he says, *Beware, lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*. And this corruption so much prevail'd, that it has given occasion to some of the Anti-trinitarians, to reproach the doctrine of the Trinity, as though it were a system of *Platonism*. And it is their being too fond of using *Plato's* words, in explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, that has given occasion to some of the fathers to be suspected, as though they were less favourable to the scripture-account thereof; by which means the adversaries have laid claim to them, as their own; and produced some unwary expressions out of *Justin Martyr*, and others, supposing them to be in the *Arian* scheme, who, in other parts of their writings, appear to be remote from it.

And this leads us to consider the method which some divines have taken, in using similitudes to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, which, at best, tend only to illustrate, and not to prove a doctrine: And we can hardly make use of this method of illustrating this doctrine, without conveying some *Ideas*, which are unbecoming, if not subversive thereof; and while we pretend to explain that which is in it self inexplicable, we do no service to the truth.

I shall here give a short specimen of this matter, that hereby we may see how some have unwarily weaken'd the cause which they have been maintaining. Some have taken a similitude from three of the divine perfections, *viz.* that there are three invisibles of God; power, wisdom, and goodness. Power creates, wisdom governs, and goodness conserves; and so they have gone on to explain this

doctrine, till they had almost given it into the hands of the *Sabellians*: and, indeed, they might have instanced in more divine perfections than three, had it been to their purpose.

Again, others have explained this doctrine, by some resemblance, which they apprehend to be of it in man; and so they speak of the soul, as a principle of a threefold life, rational, sensitive, and vegetative. Others speak of three causes concurring to produce the same effect; such as the efficient, constitutive, and final cause. Others have taken their similitude from inanimate things; as the sun, in which there is light, heat, and motion, which are inseparably connected together, and tend to produce the same effects.

Moreover, others illustrate it by a similitude, taken from a fountain, in which there is the spring in the bowels of the earth, the water bubbling out of the earth, and the stream diffusing it self in a perpetual course, receiving all it communicates from the fountain. I am sorry there is occasion to caution any against this method, of explaining the doctrine of the Trinity. But these, and many other similitudes of the like nature, we find in the writings of some, who consider not what a handle they give to the common enemy. There are, indeed, in most of them, three things, which are said, in different respects, to be one; but we may observe, that all these similitudes, and others of the like nature, brought to illustrate this doctrine, lead us to think of the whole divided into those parts, of which they consist, whereof they take notice of the number three; or they speak of three properties of the same thing; and if their wit and fancy saw it needful to speak of more than three, the same method of illustrating would serve their purpose, as much as it does the end for which they bring it. Therefore I would conclude this head, by using the words of God to *Job*, *Who is this that darkneth counsel by words, without knowledge*? Who are these that, by pretending to illustrate the doctrine of the Trinity, by similitudes, do that, which, though very foreign to their design, tends to pervert it.

6. We shall now consider what general rules may be observed for our understanding those scriptures, on which our faith, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, is founded; and since it

* See Dr. *Berriman's* Historical Account, &c. Page 94.

† Col. ii. 8.

‡ Job xxxviii. 2.

Rules to understand Scriptures concerning the TRINITY. 113

is a doctrine of pure revelation, as has been before observed, we must keep close to scripture, even to the words thereof, where they are express and distinct, as to this matter; and to consequences deduced from it, so far as they are just, and self-evident; and, at the same time, while we are sensible that we cannot comprehend this mystery, we must take care that we pretend not to be wiser above what is revealed. Now there are some rules, which may be of use to us, in our enquiries into the sense of scripture concerning this doctrine; as,

(1.) We must not suppose that the words of scripture, relating thereunto, are to be taken in a sense, which can be known by none but critics, as though it were designed only for them to understand; or that the unlearned part of the world should be left in the dark, or led astray, as to several things contained in this important doctrine. Thus we are not to suppose that we are at a loss as to the proper sense of the word *God*; or could hardly know how to direct our faith and worship, founded thereon, without the help of criticism; or, for want of being acquainted with some distinctions, concerning one that may be called *God* by nature, or the supreme *God*, and others who may be called *God* by office, or subordinate *Gods*, we should be led to ascribe divine honour where it is not due; or else we must be able to distinguish also concerning worship, and, instead of honouring the Son, as we honour the Father, must give him an inferior kind of divine worship, short of what is due to the Father. This we have no scripture warrant for; neither are we led by the scriptures to have any notion of a middle being between *God* and the creature, or one that is not properly *God*, so as the Father is, and yet more than a creature, as though there were a medium between finite and infinite; neither are we led, by scripture, to conceive of any being, that has an eternal duration, whose eternity is supposed to be before time, and yet not the same with the eternal duration of the Father. These things we shall have occasion to mention in their proper place, and therefore need make no farther use of them at present, but only to observe, from hence, how unintelligible the scripture would be in what relates to this doctrine, if the words thereof had not a plain and determinate sense, but we must make use of

these methods of reasoning, if we would arrive to the meaning thereof.

(2.) If some divine perfections are attributed in scripture to the Son and Spirit, all the perfections of the divine nature may, by a just consequence from thence, be proved to belong to them, by reason of the simplicity and unity thereof: therefore, if we can prove, from scripture, that they have some perfections ascribed to them, which are properly divine, which, I hope, it will not be a difficult matter to do, we are not to suppose that our argument is defective, or that the doctrine of the Trinity is not sufficiently maintain'd, if we cannot produce a scripture to prove every perfection of the divine nature to be ascribed to them.

(3.) When any thing is mention'd, in scripture, concerning our Saviour, or the Holy Spirit, which argues an inferiority to the Father, this is to be understood consistently with other scriptures, which speak of their having the same divine nature, since scripture does not, in the least, contradict it self; and how this may be done, will be farther consider'd under a following head.

(4.) If we have sufficient arguments to convince us of the truth of this doctrine, our faith ought not to be shaken, though we cannot fully understand the sense of some scriptures, which are brought to support the contrary; not that we are to suppose that the scripture gives countenance to two opposite doctrines: But a person may be fully satisfied concerning the sense of those scriptures, that contain the doctrine of the Trinity, and yet not be supposed perfectly to understand the meaning of every word, or phrase, used in scripture, or of some particular texts, which are sometimes brought to support the contrary doctrine; so that objections may be brought, which he is not able readily to reply to. Shall he therefore deny the truth, because he cannot remove all the difficulties that seem to lie in the way of it? That would be to part with it at too easy a rate, which, when he has done, he will find greater difficulties attending the contrary scheme of doctrine. Do they object, that we believe things contrary to reason, because we assert the incomprehensibleness of divine mysteries? or that we are Tritheists, because we believe that there are three Persons in the Godhead, and cannot exactly determine the difference between divine and human

114 *Trinity, Persons in the Godhead, &c. how understood.*

personality? We could, on the other hand, point at some difficulties, that they cannot easily surmount. What shall we think of the head of giving divine worship to our Saviour, when, at the same time, they deny him to have those perfections, that denominate him God in the same sense as the Father is so call'd? The *Socinians* found it very difficult, when the matter was disputed among themselves, to reconcile their practice with their sentiments, when they worshipped him, whose deity they denied. And the *Arians* will find that this objection equally affects their scheme; and it will be no less difficult for them to reconcile Christ's character, as Redeemer, Governor of the world, Judge of quick and dead, with their low *Ideas* of him, when denying his proper deity. These things we only mention occasionally at present, that it may not be thought that the doctrine of the Trinity is exposed to greater difficulties than the contrary doctrine, to the end that they who are not furnished with all those qualifications, which are necessary for its defence, may not reckon those arguments, by which they have been convinced of the truth thereof, less valid, because they are not able, at present, to answer all objections that may be brought against them.

5. The weight of several arguments, taken from scripture, to prove this doctrine, is to be consider'd, as well as the arguments themselves; we do not pretend that every one of them is equally conclusive, there are some which are oft-times brought to support it, which we can lay no great stress upon, and therefore shall omit to mention them, among other arguments brought to that purpose, lest we should give occasion to the adversary to insult, or conclude that we take any thing for an argument that has been brought as such to prove this doctrine. Therefore we will not pretend to prove, or peremptorily to determine that the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in those words of the Psalmist, *Psal. xxxiii. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the Hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.* Nor will we pretend to prove this doctrine from the threefold repetition of the word *Jehovah*, in the form of benediction to be used by the High Priest, *Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon*

thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Nor do we lay any stress on the threefold repetition of the word, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, Isai. vi. 3.* though we shall shew, in its proper place, that there are several things in this chapter, which evidently prove this doctrine. However, if at any time, together with arguments that are more conclusive, we bring some that are less so; this use may be made of it, to shew how the scripture way of speaking is consistent therewith in those places that do not so directly prove it. This we thought proper to mention, because it is a very common thing for those who cannot answer the most weighty arguments that are brought to support a doctrine, to bend their greatest force against those which have the least strength; and then, to triumph, as though they had gained the victory, when they have only done it, in what respects that which is less material.

II. We shall now consider in what sense we are to understand the words *Trinity* and *Persons* in the Godhead; and in what respect the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are said to be one. 'Tis true, the word *Trinity* is not to be found in scripture, but what we understand by it is plainly contained therein; therefore we use the word, as agreeable thereunto: thus we read of the *three that bear record in heaven, viz. the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one*. These three here mention'd are Persons, because they are describ'd by personal characters; and we shall take occasion elsewhere, when we prove the deity of the Son and Spirit, to consider their being one, that is, having the same divine nature, which we shall therefore wave at present, being only considering the sense of words commonly us'd by us in treating of this doctrine. All contending parties, however they have explained the word *Trinity*, according to their different ways of thinking, have, notwithstanding, in compliance with custom, used the word, and so far explained it, as that we might understand that they intend hereby three, who are, in some respect, one, though some have not cared to use the word *Person*; or if they have, it is without the most known and proper *Idea* contained in it. Thus the *Sabellians*, whenever they use the word, intend nothing by it, but three

^a 1 John v. 7.

relations, which may be attributed to the same Person, as when the same Person may be called a father, a son, and a brother, in different respects; or as when he that, at one time, sustains the person of a judge, may, at another time, sustain that of an advocate: this is what some call a Trinity of names; and they might as well have declined to use the words altogether, as to explain them in this sense.

Again, the *Arians* use the word *Person*; but these have run into another extremity, inasmuch as that whilst they avoid *Sabellianism*, they would lay themselves open to the charge of *Tritheism*, did they not deny the proper deity of the Son and Spirit; for they suppose that every distinct Person is a distinct being, agreeable to the sense of personality, when applied to men; but this, as has been before considered, is to be abstracted from the *Idea* of personality, when applied to the Persons in the Godhead. These also understand the oneness of these divine Persons, in a sense agreeable to their own scheme, and different from ours, and therefore they speak of them as one in will, consent, or design, in which respect God and the creature may be said to be one: accordingly *Arius*, and his adherents, in the council at *Nice*, refused to allow that the divine Persons were *ὁμοούσιοι* consubstantial, and, with a great many evasions and subterfuges, attempted to conceal their sentiments: all that they could be brought to own, was, that the Son was *ὁμοιος*, or *ὁμοιόσιμος*, which amounts to no more than this, that whatever likeness there may be, in some respects, yet he has not the same proper divine nature with the Father and Holy Ghost.

Which leads us to consider the sense in which 'tis generally used by those who defend what we think to be the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity. There are some, 'tis true, both among ancient and modern writers, that attempt to explain what they mean by the word *Person*, who are so unhappy as to leave the sense thereof more dark than they found it, when they have given a definition thereof, agreeable to what is used by metaphysicians and schoolmen, to this effect, that it is a *suppositum*, endowed with reason; or that 'tis one entire, individual, incommunicable, rational subsistence: and when they define Personality, some tell us, that it is a positive mode of a being

terminating and compleating its substantial nature, and giving incommunicability to it; which words need to be explained more than the thing defin'd thereby. And here I cannot but take notice of that warm debate which there was between the *Greek* and *Latin* church about the words *Hypostasis* and *Persona*; the *Latin* church concluding that the word *Hypostasis*, signified substance or essence, thought that to assert that there were three divine *Hypostases*, was to say that there were three Gods: On the other hand, the *Greek* church thought that the word *Person* did not sufficiently guard against the *Sabellian* notion of the same individual being, sustaining three relations; whereupon each part of the church was ready to brand the other with heresy, till by a free and mutual conference, in a synod at *Alexandria*, A. D. 362. they made it appear, that it was but a mere contention about the grammatical sense of a word; and then 'twas allowed, by men of temper on both sides, that either of the two words might be indifferently used^a. But what signifies the use of them, when perplex'd with the scholastick explications thereof? This has given occasion to some, whose sentiments have been very remote, as to the doctrine of the Trinity, to express themselves with some dislike; on the one hand, the *Socinians*, and some among the Remonstrants, who made very great advances towards their scheme, viz. *Curcellæus*, *Episcopius*, and others^b, have complained of clouding this doctrine with hard words; and the complaint is not altogether groundless, though it may be their design herein was to substitute such words in the room of them, as would make the remedy worse than the disease. On the other hand, some, who have embraced the doctrine of the Trinity, would not have liked its advocates the worse, had they chose to have defended it in a more plain and intelligible manner. Thus *Calvin* himself wishes, that some words, which are so warmly opposed and defended on each side, were altogether laid aside, and buried, provided that such might be retain'd as express our faith in the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Spirit, being the one God, but distinguished by their personal properties^c. And this is that plain sense of the word, which I shall make use of, in what I shall farther attempt to lay

^a Vid. Forbes. Instruct. Hist. Theol. Lib. I. cap. 2. §. 8. Personæ, &c.

^c Vid. Calv. Institut. Lib. I. cap. 13 §. 5.

^b Vid. Curcell. in Quatern. Dissert. de Voc. Trinit.

116 *The Difference between divine and human* PERSONS.

down in the defence thereof. And accordingly,

1. We never call any thing a person that is not endowed with understanding and will; and therefore the most glorious inanimate creatures, either in heaven or earth, whatever excellencies they have, or how useful soever they are to the world, they are not persons; and therefore, when the sun is described, as tho' it were a person, and is compared to a *bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing, as a strong man to run a race*^a, the words are never understood in any other, but a metaphorical sense; so *Behemoth* and the *Leviathan*, mention'd in *Job*, being no other than brute creatures, are described with personal characters, in the same figurative way of speaking; therefore we suppose a person to have an understanding and will.

2. Whenever *I, Thou, or He*, are applied to such a subject, they always connote a person; *I*, a person speaking; *Thou*, a person spoken to; and *He*, or *Him*, a person spoken of: and when such modes of speaking are sometimes applied to things that are destitute of reason, or to any moral virtues or principles of acting, which, from the nature of the thing, cannot be denominated persons; such expressions are very easily understood in a figurative sense, which may, without any difficulty, be distinguished from the proper one, whereby those who are so described are denominated persons.

3. There are some characters which always denote persons, and some works performed which are properly personal, which can be performed by none but persons. Thus the character of a father, or a son, so a Creator, a Redeemer, a benefactor, a Mediator, an advocate, a surety, a judge, a lord, a law-giver, and many others of the like nature, are all of them personal characters. So that whoever acts with design, and has such-like characters attributed to him, according to the proper acceptation of the word, him we call a person; and these characters we shall endeavour to apply to the Persons in the Godhead, to prove their distinct personality.

But since we are at present only considering the acceptation of words, we shall briefly observe the difference between a divine and a human person, when some personal properties, characters, or works, are attributed to each of them. And,

(1.) Human persons are separated one

from the other: Thus, for instance, *Peter, James, and John*, were three persons, but they were separated one from the other; whereas the Persons in the Godhead, however distinguished by their characters and properties, are never separated, as having the same divine essence or nature; as for human persons, one of them might have had a being and personality, had the other never existed, because it exists by the will of God; but the divine Persons have a necessary existence and personality, as being, in all respects, independent, so that as they could not but be God, they could not but be divine Persons; the personality of the Son and Spirit are equally independent with that of the Father, and as much independent as their being, and divine perfections.

(2.) Human persons have only the same kind of nature, which is generally called a common specifick nature, but not the same individual nature with another person; so that though every man has a nature like that of the rest of mankind, yet the human nature, as attributed to one Person, is not the same individual human nature that is attributed to another, for then the power and act of reasoning, or the *Ideas* that there are in one man, would be the same individual *Ideas* that are in another; but when we speak of the Persons in the Godhead, as having the divine nature and perfections, we say that this nature is the same individual nature in all of them, though the Persons are distinct, otherwise the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, could not be said to be truly and properly God, and to have the same understanding, will, and other perfections of the divine nature.

(3.) When we speak of human persons, we say, that as many persons as there are, so many beings there are; every human person has its own proper being, distinct from all other persons or beings; but we do not say so with respect to the divine Persons, for the divine being is but one, and therefore the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the very same; which is what we understand when we say, that though there are three Persons in the Godhead, yet they are the same in substance, or the one only living and true God.

This leads us to consider in what respect the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are said to be one; by which we mean that the Son and Holy Ghost have all

^a Psal. xix. 5.

In what respect the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are One. 117

the perfections of the divine nature, in the same sense as the Father has; to say less than this, is to assert no more than what our adversaries will allow; for they will not deny them perfections, nor would they be thought to deny them to have divine perfections; yea, many of them will not stick to say, that they are truly and properly God; by which they mean, that whatever deity is attributed to them in scripture, by the appointment of the Father, that is, whatever divine authority they have, this properly belongs to them: but, I think, they will none of them allow that they have the divine nature in the same sense in which the Father is said to have it. This is what we shall endeavour to prove; and more need not be said concerning them, in order to establish that supreme worship which is due to them, as well as the Father; and, in order hereto, we shall consider the force of those arguments contain'd in one of these *Answers*, and, together, with them, the sense of that scripture, *John* x. 30. in which our Saviour says, *I and my Father are one*; as also that other scripture, *1 John* v. 7. that *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, who bear record in heaven, are one*; the consideration whereof we shall reserve to a following head.

And inasmuch as they are said to be equal in power and glory, we may observe; that there are two expressions, which we often use, to set forth the deity of the Son and Spirit; sometimes we say they are God, equal with the Father; at other times, that they have the same essential perfections. To which, it may be, some will reply, that if they are equal, they cannot be the same; or, on the other hand, if they are the same, they cannot be equal. For the understanding what we mean by such-like expressions, let it be observed, that when we consider them as having the divine essence, or any of the perfections thereof, we do not chuse to describe them as equal, but the same; we do not say that the wisdom, power, holiness, &c. of the Son and Spirit, are equal to the same perfections, as ascribed to the Father: but when we speak of them as distinct Persons, then we consider them as equal, the essential glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the same; but their personal glory is equal; and in this sense we would be understood, when we say the Son and Holy Ghost are each of them God,

or divine Persons, equal with the Father.

III. We shall prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are distinct Persons in the Godhead, by applying what has been but now observed, by which any one may, by our common mode of speaking, be denominated a person; and to this we shall add something concerning those personal properties, mentioned in one of the *Answers* we are explaining, with respect to the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost. And,

I. To prove the personality of the Son. If this be reckon'd needless, inasmuch as the *Arians* and *Socinians* never yet called it in question, we own that it is not necessary, when we dispute with them to prove it: But inasmuch as the *Sabellians* deny it, as a late writer* has done, who plainly gives in to that scheme, and concludes the Son of God to be no other than the eternal reason of God; and so he renders that text, *John* i. 1. *In the beginning was the word*, that is, *reason*, and *by him*, that is, *by it*, *were all things made*. And when 'tis objected, that this mode of speaking signifies nothing more than a quality in God; the only answer that he gives to that, is, that it signifies no more a quality, than if we should translate it, *The Word*, as 'tis generally done: I say, if persons, whether they pretend to be *Sabellians* or no, express themselves in such a manner, 'tis certainly necessary for us to prove the personality of the Son.

It appears therefore, that the Son is a distinct Person from the Father.

(1.) Inasmuch as we often read, in scripture, of two divine Persons speaking to, or of, one another, the distinguishing personal characters, *I*, *Thou*, and *He*, being applied to them: thus it is said, *Psal.* cx. 1. *The Lord*, that is the Father, *said unto my Lord*, namely, the Son, *sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool*; this may be observed throughout the whole Psalm; thus Ver. 3. *Thy people shall be willing*; and Ver. 6. *He*, meaning the Son, *shall judge among the heathen*; and Ver. 7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way*; so *Psal.* xlv. 2. speaking of the Son, *Thou art fairer than the children of men*; and Ver. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. The places of scripture where we have such modes of speaking, concerning the Son, are almost

* See *Le Clerc's* Supplement to *Dr. Hammond* on the New Testament, Preface to *John* i.

118 The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, distinct Persons.

innumerable; and therefore we proceed to consider,

(2.) Other personal characters given him; thus when he is called the Son of God, whatever we are to understand by that relation or character, of which more under a following head, it certainly denotes him a Person distinct from the Father; so does his being sent into the world by the Father, which expression is frequently used in the New Testament; now a quality, relation, or property, cannot be said to be sent as the Son is. So when he is described as a *Redeemer*, a *Mediator*, a *Surety*, a *Creator*; and when he is styled, by the Prophet, the *everlasting Father*; and often described as a *Prophet*, *Priest*, or *King*; or *Lord of all*, or the *Prince of peace*, or the *Prince of the kings of the earth*; all these characters sufficiently prove his personality: and all those works which he performs, as sustaining these relations or characters, are properly personal; and some of them are never ascribed to any other person. Thus the Father, or Holy Ghost, are never said to assume the human nature, or to become sureties for the salvation of men, or to execute mediatorial offices, subservient thereunto; from all which it evidently appears, that the Son is a distinct Person: that he is a divine Person, will be proved under a following head.

2. To prove the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost. This is denied, not only by the *Sabellians*, but by some of the *Socinians*; yea, even by *Socinus* himself; who describes the Holy Ghost as the power of God, intending hereby, as his mode of speaking seems to denote, the energy of the divine nature; or that whereby the Father, who is the only one, to whom, according to him, the divine nature is attributed, produces those effects which require infinite power; so that they call the Spirit, the power of God essentially consider'd; these set aside all those proofs that may be produced from Scripture, to evince his personality, which are so plain and evident, that many of them have dissented from *Socinus* herein, and own'd the Spirit to be a Person. Accordingly some of them have described him as the chief of created

Spirits, or the Head of the Angels, because they deny his divine nature. Thus a bold writer expresses himself; "I believe that there is one principal Minister of God and Christ, peculiarly sent from heaven, to sanctify the church, who, by reason of his eminency and intimacy with God, is singled out of the number of the other heavenly Ministers, or Angels, and compris'd in the holy Trinity, being the third Person thereof; and that this Minister of God and Christ is the Holy Spirit."

Now we shall prove the Personality of the Holy Ghost, by considering some personal characters ascribed to, and works perform'd by him. Thus there are several such characters, by which he is denominated a Person; particularly when he is called a *Sanctifier*, a *Reprover*, a *Witness*, a *Comforter*, it evidently appears from hence that he is a Person: thus when it is said, in *John* xvi. 8. that *when he, to wit, the Comforter is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment*; and also, that *he will guide you into all truth; he shall shew you things to come, &c.* And in *John* xiv. 16, 17. there is the distinct personality of the three Persons, and particularly of the Holy Ghost, asserted; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth*; and also in *Ver.* 26. *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things*.

'Tis certain, that to be said to teach, or to instruct, is a personal character, so is to speak, or to dictate, to another what he should say; but this he is said to do, as our Saviour says to his Disciples, *Whatever shall be given you in that hour that speak ye; for 'tis not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost*, *Mark* xiii. 11.

Moreover, to witness, or testify, is a personal character; especially when the testimony is not merely objective, as when *Job* calls his wrinkles and his leanness a witness against him, *Job* xvi. 8. But when there is a formal testimony given, he that gives it, is, according to our common way of speaking, generally consider'd as a Person; and thus the Holy Ghost is described, *Acts* v. 32. *We are*

* See *Biddle's* Confession of Faith, touching the Holy Trinity, Article VI.

Some have thought, that *ἐκείνος* being of the Masculine Gender, because it refers immediately to *πνεῦμα*, which is of the Neuter, implies, that the Spirit is taken personally, which is the Reason of this grammatical Construction: But if it be said that the Reason why it is Masculine, is, because it agrees with *παράκλητος*, it, notwithstanding, proves the Personality of the Holy Ghost; since a Comforter is a personal Character. The same thing is observed in the grammatical Construction of that Scripture, *1st* *Thess.* i. 13, 14. speaking concerning the Holy Spirit of Promise, *τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐκείνης*; 'tis said, *ὃς ἐστὶν ἀπαράκλητος*, which denotes the personal Character of the Spirit, otherwise it would have been *ἐστὶν ἀπαράκλητος*, unless you suppose *ὃς* agrees with *ἀπαράκλητος*, which seems to be a more strain'd Sense of the grammatical Construction than the other, which proves his Personality.

his witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him. Here the Holy Ghost's being a witness, is as much a personal character, as their being witnesses; and, *Acts xx. 23.* 'tis said, *The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that bonds and afflictions abide me.*

Again, dwelling is a personal character; no one ever supposes that any thing that is in a house dwells there, excepting persons; but the Holy Ghost is said to dwell in believers, *John xiv. 17.* and alluding hereto, as also connoting his divine personality, 'tis said, *1 Cor. vi. 19.* *Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost;* as a house is the dwelling place of a person, so a temple is the dwelling place of a divine Person.

Again, to send any one is a personal character; but this is attributed to the Holy Ghost, *Acts xiii. 4.* *The Apostles being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed.*

Again, acting with a sovereign will and pleasure, is what belongs only to a person, but this is applied to the Holy Ghost, *Acts xv. 28.* *It seem'd good to the Holy Ghost and to us.*

Again, prohibiting, or forbidding, a person to act, is a personal character; but this is applied to the Holy Ghost, *Acts xvi. 6.* *The Apostles were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.*

Again, to constitute, or appoint, any one to execute an office, is a personal character; but this the Holy Ghost is said to do, *Acts xx. 28.* he is said to have made them overseers. There are several other personal works and characters, which might have been mention'd; but these are, I humbly conceive, sufficient to prove the thing intended, that the Holy Ghost is a Person. I have no more than mention'd the scriptures, which contain these personal characters, because I shall have occasion, under a following head, to refer to some of them for the proof of his deity.

Object. It will be objected, by those who are favourers of the Sabellian scheme, that the characters, which we have laid down, to prove the personality of the Son, and Holy Ghost, are not sufficient to answer that end; inasmuch as they are sometimes applied, in a metaphorical way, to those things which no one supposes to be persons, and therefore that they may be taken in this sense, when applied to the Son and Spirit. To support this objection, they produce several instances

out of the book of Job, and some other parts of scripture, where things are described with personal characters, which are not really persons. Thus *Job xxxix. 11, 12.* speaking concerning the unicorn, it is said; *Wilt thou trust him? Wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?* So concerning the horse, it is said, as though he acted with design, as an intelligent creature, *Ver. 21, &c.* *He goeth on to meet the armed men; he mocketh at fear; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet; he saith among the trumpets, Ha! ha!* And concerning the eagle, *Ver. 28.* *She dwelleth in the rock.* And concerning the leviathan, *Chap. xli. 3, &c.* *Will he make many supplications to thee? Will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. Darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of the spear.* And *Ver. 34.* *He beholdeth all high things; he is a King over all the children of pride.* There are many other personal characters given to brute creatures, which are taken in a metaphorical sense; and sometimes they are applied to inanimate creatures. Thus *Job xxxviii. 28, &c.* *Hath the rain a father? and who hath begotten the drops of dew? out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gender'd it? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?* By which nothing is intended but the signs in the Zodiac, or some of the constellations, together with the particular stars, of which they consist; yet these are described, as though they were persons. So *Ver. 35.* *Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, here we are?* Again, the powers and faculties of the soul of man have sometimes personal characters ascribed to them. Thus, *Conscience* is said to bear witness, *Rom. ix. 1.* And some instances may be brought from scripture of a person's speaking to himself; yet this doth not connote two persons in man, one speaking, and the other spoken to. It is therefore infer'd from hence, that we cannot prove the personality of the Son and Holy Ghost from those personal characters ascribed to them, which may be taken in a metaphorical sense, as well as in the instances but now mentioned.

Answer.

120 *The Son and Spirit not metaphorically call'd* PERSONS.

Ans. In answer to this objection, several things may be consider'd.

1. Though the scripture often uses figurative, and particularly metaphorical, ways of speaking, yet these may be easily distinguished, from the like phrases used elsewhere, concerning which we have sufficient ground to conclude, that they are to be taken in a proper sense; therefore though it is true that there are personal characters given to things which are not persons, yet we are not to conclude from hence, that whenever the same modes of speaking are used, and applied to those who are capable of performing personal actions, that therefore these must be taken in a metaphorical sense; which is a known exception from the common *Idea* contained in the same words.

2. Most of those passages of scripture, where personal characters are attributed to things, which are not persons, in a metaphorical sense, are in the poetical books thereof; or in some particular places, where there is a peculiar beautiful mode of speaking taken from thence; will it therefore follow, that these personal characters are used in other parts of scripture, in which the Holy Ghost does not think fit to express himself in such an elegance of stile? Now it is certain, that the personal characters before mention'd are given to the Son and Holy Ghost, throughout the whole scripture, without designing to use a lofty figurative, or uncommon way of speaking, as in the instances before mentioned.

3. We must not suppose that the Holy Ghost uses any figurative ways of speaking, so as to cast a veil on plain truths, or to endanger our being led hereby out of the way, as we should certainly be, if so many hundred places of scripture, in which these personal characters are applied to the Son and Spirit, were to be taken in a metaphorical sense, without any intimation given in the context that they are so to be understood. And it will be certainly very difficult to find out any place in scripture that may serve to direct us in our application of these characters, *viz.* when they are to be taken in a metaphorical sense, when applied to the Persons in the Godhead, and when not.

4. Though we find many metaphors in scripture, yet we observe that the most important truths are laid down in the plainest manner; so that the injudicious and unlearned reader, who understands nothing of the art of rhetoric, or

criticism, may be instructed thereby, at least they are not universally wrapt up in such figurative ways of speaking; and it would be strange, if the account we have of the personality of the Son, and Holy Ghost, which is a doctrine of the highest importance, and such as renders them distinct objects of worship, should be express'd in such a way, as that we should be at the greatest uncertainty whether they are persons or not.

5. If these personal characters are not metaphorical, when applied to men, or Angels, who are subjects capable of having personality attributed to them, why should they be reckon'd metaphorical, when applied to the Son and Spirit, who, though they are not distinct beings, yet they have a divine understanding and will, and therefore are not render'd incapable of having personality ascrib'd to them, as signified by these characters.

6. The asserting that personal characters, attributed to the Son and Spirit, are always to be understood in a metaphorical sense, would give equal ground to conclude that they are to be so taken, when applied to the Father; and accordingly, while we militate against the personality of these, we should, at the same time, overthrow his personality; and while we deny that there are three Persons in the Godhead, we should, in effect, suppose that there are no Persons in the Godhead, any otherwise than as the Godhead, which is common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, is often described, as though it were a Person; and if ever the word *Personality* is used or applied in a metaphorical sense, it must be when the Godhead is so described.

7. Though some personal characters are occasionally applied, in a metaphorical sense, to things that are not Persons, yet it is not usual for them to be described, as performing personal works, and these not occasionally hinted at, and join'd with other metaphorical ways of speaking, but a long series of action referr'd to, and variety of works perform'd, which must certainly be taken in a most proper sense. Thus when the Son and Spirit are set forth in scripture, as performing those works, which are expressive of their personal glory; the one in what respects the purchase of redemption; and the other in the application thereof. And when each of them is described as standing in those relations to men, which are founded in the performance of these works for them, certainly this must be taken in a most

The Son's eternal Generation how commonly understood. 121

most proper sense; and we must take heed, lest, while we attempt to prove that the Persons in the Godhead are to be taken in a figurative sense, we do not give occasion to any to think that the great benefits, which we receive from them, are to be understood in the same sense.

We shall now take notice of some other personal properties, whereby the Son and Spirit are distinguished from one another, and from the Father; particularly, as they are express'd in one of the *Answers* under our present consideration; it is proper to the Father to beget the Son, or, as it is sometimes express'd, to be unbegotten; and to the Son, to be begotten of the Father; and to the Holy Ghost, to proceed from the Father and the Son, from all eternity. This is certainly one of the most difficult heads of divinity that can be insisted on; and some have made it more so, by their attempting to explain it. I have sometimes thought that it would be the safest, and most eligible way, to pass it over, as a doctrine less necessary to be understood; but since there are several scripture-expressions, on which it is founded, which we ought to pay the greatest deference to, much more than to those explications, which are merely human; and inasmuch as these properties plainly prove the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be distinct Persons, therefore we must humbly enquire into the meaning of those scriptures, wherein they are contain'd; and so speak something as to what is generally called the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost; and I hope, through divine assistance, we shall advance no doctrine that is either subversive of our faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, which we are endeavouring to maintain, derogatory to the essential or personal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, or altogether contrary to the sense, in which many Christians, who are unacquainted with those modes of speaking, used by the fathers and schoolmen, understand those scriptures upon which this doctrine is founded.

And here we shall give a brief account of what we apprehend to be the commonly received sentiments of divines, who, in their writings, have strenuously maintained, and judiciously defended, the doctrine of the Trinity, concerning the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, which I shall endeavour to do with the greatest

deference to those who have treated of these subjects, as well as with the greatest impartiality; and shall take occasion to shew how far the *Arians* conclude that we give up the cause to them; and yet how little reason they have to insult us upon this head.

(1.) As to the eternal generation of the Son, it is generally explain'd in this manner; the Father is called by some, the fountain of the Godhead, an expression taken from some of the fathers, who defended the *Nicene* faith: But others, of late, have rather chose to call the Father the fountain of the Trinity; and he is said to be of himself, or unbegotten; which they lay down as his distinct personal character, from that of the Son.

On the other hand, the Son, as to his personality, is generally described, as being from the Father, and many chuse to express themselves about this mystery in these terms; that the Father communicated the divine essence to the Son, which is the most common mode of speaking; though others think it safer to say, that he communicated the divine personality to him; though I cannot tell which is least exceptionable.

But when I find others calling it the Father's giving the divine essence to the Son, their mode of speaking being founded, as they apprehend, on that scripture, *John v. 26. As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*, I cannot but think it an unguarded expression, and foreign to the design of the Holy Ghost in that scripture, as will be hereafter consider'd. The *Arians* are ready to insult us upon such modes of speaking, and suppose that we conclude that the Son receives his divine perfections, and therefore cannot be God equal with the Father: but, however, none of them, who use this expression, suppose that the Son's deity is founded on the arbitrary will of the Father, for they all assert that the divine nature is communicated necessarily, and from all eternity, as the sun communicates its rays necessarily, which are of equal duration with it; so that while they make use of a word, which, according to its most known acceptation, seems subversive of the truth, they happily, for truth's sake, explain away the proper sense thereof; so that all they can be blamed for herein, by the adversary, is impropriety of expression.

Again, others speak a little more exceptionably, when, explaining the eternal

generation of the Son, they ſay that the Father produced him: but this *Idea* they alſo happily explain away; and therefore ſay it is not ſuch a production, where the cauſe produces the effect, though ſome of the fathers, who have been in the Trinitarian ſcheme, have unwarily call'd the Father the cauſe of the Son; yet our modern divines ſeldom, or never, uſe that expreſſion, or, if they ſpeak of an eternal production, they ſuppoſe it vaſtly differs from the production of all creatures, or from that ſenſe in which the *Arians* ſuppoſe the Son to be produced by him; but certainly this expreſſion had better be laid aſide, leſt it ſhould be thought that we conclude the Son not equally neceſſary, and, from all eternity, co-exiſtent with the Father, which our divines, how unwarily ſoever in other reſpects they may expreſs themſelves, are very far from denying.

(2.) We ſhall now proceed to conſider how ſome divines expreſs themſelves, concerning the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, which they generally do in this manner, as though the divine eſſence were communicated by the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghoſt; and ſo they ſuppoſe that the Holy Ghoſt, at leaſt as he is a divine Perſon, or has the divine nature communicated to him, cannot be ſaid to be, any more than the Son, of himſelf, but from the Father and the Son, from whom he proceeds, or receives, as ſome expreſs it, the divine nature, and others the divine perſonality.

Others ſpeak of the Spiration of the Holy Ghoſt, which they ſuppoſe to be the ſame with his proceſſion; but the world is much at a loſs to underſtand what they mean by the word *Spiration*: It ſeems to be a meer metaphorical expreſſion, as when they call him the breath of the Father and the Son, and, if ſo, then it will not prove his proper perſonality: but ſince we are pretty much in the dark about the reaſon of this mode of ſpeaking, it would be much better to lay it aſide, as many modern writers have done.

As to the manner of the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, there was, about the *Eighth* and *Ninth Centuries*, a very warm diſpute between the *Greek* and *Latin* church; whether the Spirit proceeded from the Father only, or from the Father and the Son; and the controversy aroſe to ſuch a height, that they charged one another with hereſy and ſchiſm, when neither ſide well underſtood what they

contended about; and if they had agreed to the healing expedient, afterwards propoſed, that they ſhould mutually acknowledge that the Holy Ghoſt was from the Father by the Son, the matter would have been left as much in the dark as it was before.

Some ſpeak of the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, as though he was produced by the Father and the Son, as the Son, as was before obſerved, is ſaid in his eternal generation, to have been produced by the Father; yet they ſuppoſe that neither of them were ſo produced, as that they may be called effects; and they term it the production of a Perſon in, and not out, of the divine eſſence, for that would be to give away the cauſe we contend for: but which way ſoever we take it, it contains ſuch an impropriety of expreſſion, as can hardly be defended; and it is much better to explain away the proper and grammatical ſenſe of words, than to corrupt the truth; however, I would not copy after them in this mode of ſpeaking.

Moreover, ſome have pretended to determine the difference between the eternal generation of the Son, and the Spirit's proceſſion; to which they have, with modeſty, premixed, that it is not to be explain'd; but, as far as they enter into this matter, they ſuppoſe that they differ in this; that in the eternal generation of the Son, the Father communicated the divine eſſence, or, at leaſt, perſonality to him, which is his act alone, and herewith he communicated a property, or power, to him, to communicate the ſame divine eſſence to the Holy Ghoſt; whereas, when the Holy Ghoſt is ſaid to proceed from the Father and the Son, there is no power therewith convey'd to him to communicate the divine eſſence to any other, as a fourth Perſon in the Godhead. Theſe things may be obſerved in the writings of thoſe who treat of this ſubject; but, it is to be feared, they enter too far into the explication of this unſearchable myſtery, and ſome will be ready to conclude that they attempt to be wiſe above what is written. And,

If I may be allowed to give my ſenſe of the communication of the divine eſſence, though it will probably be thought that I do not ſay enough concerning it, yet I hope that, in other reſpects, none will conclude that I advance any thing ſubverſive of the doctrine of the Trinity, when I aſſert that the divine eſſence is communicated, not by the Father to the

Son

Son and Holy Ghost, as imparting or conveying it to them; but take the word *Communicate* in another sense, namely, that all the perfections of the divine nature are communicated, that is, equally attributed to, or predicated of, the Father, Son and Spirit; this sense of the word is what some intend when they say the human nature is communicated to every individual, upon which account they are denominated men; and, as the word is used in this sense, sometimes by logicians and schoolmen, so it seems to be taken in the same sense, in *Heb. ii. 14.* where the *Greek* words, τὰ παιδία κέκοι- νόμηκε σαρκὸς καὶ αἱματος, which we render, the children were partakers of flesh and blood, might be render'd, as in the *vulgar Latin Version*, *Communicaverunt carni & sanguini*, i.e. they have the human nature communicated to, and predicated of, them, or they are truly and properly men. And it is in this sense that we use the word, when we say that the different properties of the divine and human nature are communicated to, that is, predicated of the Person of Christ, which divines generally call a communication of properties. In this sense I would be understood, when I say that the divine perfections are communicated to, or predicated of, the Father, Son, and Spirit; and this all who maintain the doctrine of the Trinity will allow of. The other sense of communication, viz. imparting, conveying, or giving the divine essence, I shall be very ready to fall in with, when the apparent difficulties, which, to me, seem to lie in the way thereof, some of which have been already consider'd, are removed.

As to what concerns the farther explication of this mystery, we may observe, that the more nice some have been in their speculations about it, the more they have seem'd bewilder'd: thus when some have enquired whether the eternal generation is one single act, or an act continued; or whether when it is said, this day have I begotten thee, the meaning is, that the divine nature was communicated at once, or whether it is perpetually communicating. And the difficulties that attend their asserting either the one or the other of them, which they, who enquire into these matters, take notice of, I shall entirely pass over, as apprehending that this doctrine receives no advantage by such disquisitions.

Neither do I think it tends much to our edification to enquire, as some have done, whether, in the eternal generation, the Father is consider'd as acting, and the Son as him on whom the action terminates, as the subject thereof; which, when they suppose it does, they farther enquire whether, in this respect, he is said to be passive, which they are not willing to assert.

And I cannot but take notice of another nicety of inquiry, viz. whether, in the eternal generation, the Son is consider'd as co-existent with the Father, or as having the divine essence, and hereby only deriving his sonship from him, from all eternity; or whether he derives both his sonship and his essence; the former of which is the most generally received opinion. But I am not desirous to enter into this enquiry, especially without first determining what we mean by sonship.

There is, indeed, one thing that must be enquired into, and that is, whatever be the explication given of the eternal generation of the son, and procession of the Holy Ghost, whether they are each of them self-existent, or, as some call it, αὐτόθεος; and it is generally determined, that the Son and Holy Ghost have the same self-existent divine nature: but with respect to their manner of having it, some say the Son has his divine nature from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and Son; or that the Father only is self-existent, as some speak; or, as most others say, that he is self-subsistent; and that this is his personal property, as he is distinguished from the Son and Holy Ghost, whom they conclude not to be self-subsistent, but the one to subsist from the Father, and the other from the Father and the Son. This is a generally received opinion, notwithstanding I must confess my self to be a little at a loss to account for it; so that the principal thing, in which I am obliged, till I receive farther conviction, to differ from many others, is, whether the Son and Spirit have a communicated or derived personality; this many assert, but, I think, without sufficient proof; for I cannot but conclude that the divine personality, not only of the Father, but of the Son and Spirit, is as much independent, and underived, as the divine essence.

Thus we have consider'd how some have embarrass'd this doctrine, by being too nice in their enquiries about it: we

* Some, who take Delight in darkening this Matter, by pretending to explain it, call the former αὐτόθεος; the latter, *fluens*.

shall proceed to consider how others have done prejudice to it, by pretending to explain it; and when they make use of similitudes to that purpose, have rather prejudiced the enemies of this doctrine against it, than given any conviction to them. I shall only mention what I have found in some of their writings, whom, in other respects, I cannot but exceedingly value, as having deserved well of the church of God, in defending this truth with good success, yet, when they take this method to explain this doctrine, to say the best of it, they have done but little service to the cause which they have maintain'd: thus we find them expressing themselves to this purpose; as the soul of man sometimes reflects on it self, and considers its own nature, powers, and faculties, or when it is conversant about it self, as its object, this produces an *Idea*, which contains the moral image of it self, and is like as when he sees his face in a glass, and beholds the image of himself; this, say they, illustrates the eternal generation of the Son, as God beholding himself, or his divine perfections, begets an image of himself, or has an eternal *Idea* of his own perfections in his mind, which is called his internal word, as opposed to the word spoken, which is external; by this they express the generation of the Son, for which reason he is called, in *Heb. i. 3.* *The brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, as the wax expresses the character or mark of the seal that is impress'd on it.

Again, they farther add, that there is a mutual love between the Father and the Son, which brings forth a third Person, or Subsistence, in the Godhead, to wit, the Holy Ghost; so that as there is in the divine essence an infinite understanding reflecting on it self, whereby it begets a Son, as was before observed, and an infinite will, which leads him to reflect on himself with love and delight, as the chief good, whereby he brings forth a third Person in the Godhead, to wit, the Holy Ghost, accordingly they describe this divine Person, as being the result of the mutual joy and delight that there is between the Father and the Son, these explications many are at a loss to understand; and, we humbly conceive, 'twould be much better to let them alone, and confess this doctrine to be an inexplicable mystery, or else some other way may be found out, which is less liable to these exceptions, while we explain those scriptures, which speak of the generation of the

Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost.

The scriptures generally brought in defence of this doctrine, are such as these.

1. To prove the eternal generation of the Son, there are several scriptures refer'd to, particularly that in which the Father is represented as speaking to him, in *Psal. ii. 7.* *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee*; that is, say they, I have, in my eternal, unsuccessive duration, communicated, or imparted, the divine essence, or, at least, personality to thee.

Another scripture brought to this purpose, is that in *Prov. viii. 22, 23, 25.* *The Lord possessed me*, speaking of his eternal Word, or Son, *in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, before the mountains were settled; before the hills, was I brought forth.* Where they suppose that God's possessing him, which is certainly to be taken in a different sense, from his being the possessor of all creatures, is to be understood of his being God's proper Son by nature; and his being said to be *brought forth*, they suppose, proves his eternal generation.

Another scripture brought to the same purpose, is that in *Micah v. 2.* speaking of the Son, it is said, *His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting*; by which they attempt to prove his being begotten in the divine essence: But how that can be call'd his *going forth*, I do not well understand.

Moreover, that scripture before mention'd, in *Heb. i. 3.* *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.* And another parallel scripture, in *Col. i. 15.* *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature*; where, by *first born*, they understand, that he was begotten before all worlds; the divine essence, or, at least, personality, being communicated to him from eternity.

Another scripture, which we before refer'd to, brought to prove this doctrine, is *John v. 26.* *As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*; that is, say some, as the Father hath all divine perfections in himself originally; so the Son hath these perfections, by communication from him; which they suppose not to be an arbitrary, but a necessary donation.

Again,

Of CHRIST's Sonship, and the Spirit's Proceſſion. 123

Again, this is farther prov'd, from *John* i. 14. where he is ſaid to be *the only begotten of the Father*. And *Ver.* 18. *The only begotten Son, who is in the boſom of the Father*. From the former of which ſcriptures they prove the eternal generation of the Son; and from the latter, his being begotten in the divine eſſence, which diſtinguiſhes it from all finite productions, which are out of himſelf.

Moreover, there are many other ſcriptures that ſpeak of our Saviour as the Son of God; and particularly in *Matt.* xvi. 16. he is called, *The Son of the living God*; and in *Rom.* viii. 32. *his own Son*, ἰδιος υἱός, which ſome render, *his proper Son*, that is, not only his Son, who has the ſame divine nature with himſelf, but as implying alſo the manner of its communication; and in *Matt.* iii. 17. he is called his *beloved Son*.

2. We ſhall now conſider the ſcriptures that are generally brought to prove the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, in the ſenſe before explain'd. Thus he is ſaid, in *John* xv. 26. to be *ſent by the Son from the Father*, and to *proceed from the Father*; where they ſuppoſe that this *proceeding from the Father*, ſignifies the communication of his divine eſſence, or, at leaſt, his perſonality; and his being *ſent by the Son*, implies, that this communication is from him, as well as the Father. So in *Gal.* iv. 6. it is ſaid, *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son*; and, in *John* xvi. 7. our Saviour ſays, *I will ſend him unto you*; and, *Ver.* 14. *He ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you*. Theſe ſcriptures, if not brought directly to prove this doctrine, are, notwithstanding, ſuppoſed ſufficient to evince the truth thereof, inasmuch as the Son could not ſend him, if he had not proceeded from him; nor could he have receiv'd that which he ſhews to his people, if he had not, from all eternity, received his divine eſſence, or perſonality, from him.

There is another ſcripture, brought by ſome very valuable divines, to prove the Spiration of the Holy Ghoſt, which is ſo termed, either as ſuppoſed to be expreſſive of the manner of his having his perſonality as a Spirit, or elſe it is taken from thoſe words of ſcripture, brought to prove this Spiration, *John* xx. 22. in which our Saviour is ſaid to have *breathed on his Diſciples*, ſaying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*; which external ſign, or ſymbol, uſed in the act of conferring him on them in time, proves his proceſſion from him from eternity; as a tem-

poral proceſſion ſuppoſes an eternal one.

Theſe are the ſcriptures which are generally brought to prove this doctrine. But we ſhall take occaſion to enquire whether there may not be another ſenſe given thereof, which is leſs liable to exception, as well as more intelligible. It is to be own'd, that they contain ſome of the deep things of God; and therefore it is no wonder if they are reckon'd among thoſe ſcriptures that are hard to be underſtood: But ſo far as I have any light; either from the context of the reſpective ſcriptures, or the analogy of faith, I cannot but conclude that theſe, and all others of the like nature, that are brought to prove the eternal generation, or ſonſhip of Chriſt, reſpect him as God-man, Mediator; and thoſe other ſcriptures, that ſpeak of the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, reſpect the ſubſerviency of his acting as a divine Perſon to the Mediator's glory, in applying the work of redemption.

And here we ſhall conſider theſe ſcriptures in particular; and then answer ſome objections that may be brought againſt this ſenſe thereof, whereby, I hope, it will appear, that we aſſert nothing but what tends to the glory of the Son and Spirit, eſtabliſheth the doctrine of the ever bleſſed Trinity, and agrees with the commonly received faith, ſo far as it is founded on ſcripture, without being tenacious of thoſe modes of ſpeaking, which have the ſanction of venerable antiquity, and are ſupported by the reputation of thoſe who have uſed them; though, it may be, thoſe ſcriptures will be otherwiſe underſtood by them, who regard explications that are merely human, no farther than they are defenſible.

The firſt ſcripture before mentioned, which was brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son, was *Pſal.* ii. 7. *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. This cannot, I humbly conceive, reſpect the communication of the divine nature, or perſonality to the Son, as appears from the words immediately foregoing, in which it is ſaid, *I will declare the decree*, or what I had before decreed, or determined. Far be it from us to ſuppoſe that the divine nature, or perſonality of the Son, was the reſult of an act of the divine will: and, indeed, the whole *Pſalm* plainly ſpeaks of Chriſt as Mediator; as ſuch he is ſaid, *Ver.* 6. *To be ſet as God's King on his holy hill of Sion*, and, as ſuch, he is ſaid to inter-

K. k

cede,

126 Scriptures relating to CHRIST's Sonship explain'd.

cede, or ask of God; and, as the result hereof, the Father is said, Ver. 8. to give him *the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*; and all this is spoken of him, as a farther explication of those words; *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*. And the Apostle, in Heb. i. 5. refers to this scripture, when speaking of him as Mediator, and as having, by inheritance, obtain'd a more excellent name than the Angels; which he has done, as he is constituted Heir of all things: and he subjoins that promise, *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*, that is, he shall perform that obedience that is due from him as a Son; and I will give unto him those rewards, which are due from a Father, who has committed this work to him, with a promise of the conferring those revenues of mediatorial glory on him, that should ensue on his fulfilling it. Moreover, this scripture is refer'd to, by the Apostle, in Acts xiii. 32, 33. when he says, *That the promise, which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee*. So that it is plain, the Psalmist speaks of him, as having finished his work of redemption, at which time he was raised from the dead; and then, in the fullest sense, he had *the heathen for his inheritance*. And, upon this account, he is also called, in Rev. i. 5. *The first-begotten of the dead*; and, in Col. i. 18. *The first-born from the dead*.

The next scripture brought to prove the eternal generation of the Son, in Prov. viii. 22, 23, 25. refers to Christ, as Mediator; when God is said to *possess him in the beginning of his way*, the meaning is, that in his eternal design of grace relating to the redemption of man, the Father possessed, or laid claim to him as his Son, or Servant, appointed in the human nature, to bring about that great work; and accordingly it follows, *I was set up from everlasting*, that is, fore-ordained of God, to be the Mediator and Head of his elect; and this agrees very well with what follows, Ver. 30, 31. *I was daily his delight*, that is, God the Father was well pleased with him, when foreseeing, from all eternity, what he would do in time, to secure the glory of his perfections in the redemption of man, as God publicly testified his well-pleasedness in him, when he was actually

engaged in this work. And it is farther added, *That he was always rejoicing before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men*; which signifies the great pleasure Christ had, in his eternal foresight of what he would do for the sons of men, whom he is elsewhere said to have loved with an everlasting love.

The next scripture is in Micah v. 2. where, speaking of the Son, 'tis said, *Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting*. For the understanding of which scripture, let us consider, that God's goings are sometimes taken in scripture for what he does, whereby he renders himself the object of his peoples astonishment and praise; these are his visible goings. Thus, Psal. lxxviii. 24. *They have seen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary*; that is, they shall see the great things, which thou wilt do for man, in the work of redemption; so in this scripture, the sense whereof we are considering, we read of Christ's goings forth, his invisible goings, as we may call them, or his secret purposes, or designs of grace, relating to the redemption of his people: *His goings forth were from everlasting*; that is, he did, from eternity, design to save them; the outgoings of his heart were towards them, and, as the result hereof, he came into the world according to this prediction, and was born in Bethlehem, as in the foregoing words.

The next scripture is in Heb. i. 3. where he is said to be *the brightness of his, that is, his Father's glory, and the express image of his Person*. By the former expression, I humbly conceive, is meant, that the glory of the divine perfections shines forth most illustriously in Christ, our great Mediator, as the Apostle expresses it elsewhere, 2 Cor. iv. 6. *God hath shined in our hearts, to give the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ*. By the latter expression, in which Christ is called *the express image of his Person*, I humbly conceive is meant, that though his divine nature be the same with the Father's, yet his personality is distinct; and therefore it is not said to be the same, but the *image of his Father's*; and it also proves his proper divine personality, as being, in all respects, like that of the Father, though not the same.

The next scripture is in John v. 26. *As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*. We cannot think that the Father's having

having given to the Son to have life in himself, implies his giving him the divine perfections, for the propriety of that mode of speaking, cannot be defended consistently with his proper underived deity. But, I humbly conceive, that the meaning of it is this; that *as the Father hath life in himself*, that is, as he has eternal life, or all that fulness of grace and glory, which his people are to be made partakers of, at his own disposal, and has designed to give it in his eternal purpose; so hath he given to the Son, as Mediator, to have life in himself, that is, that, as such, he should be the treasury of all this grace, and that he should have life in himself to dispense to them; this is very agreeable to his character and office, as Mediator, and with what follows Ver. 24. where it is said; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life*; and Ver. 27. it is farther added, that *He*, to wit, the Father, *hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man*; which plainly denotes, that this life, which he has received from the Father, is that eternal life, which he is impower'd or commission'd to bestow on his people, as Mediator; this he has in himself, and accordingly he is said, *John i. 14. to be full of grace and truth*; so, *Col. i. 19. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*.

The next thing to be consider'd, is the sense of those many scriptures, in which our Saviour is described as the *Son of God*, or the *Son of the living God*, or *his only begotten Son*, or *his own or proper Son*, as distinguished from all others, which, I humbly conceive, sets forth his glory, as Mediator, which we shall endeavour to prove. But, to prepare our way for the prosecution of this argument, as well as to prevent any misconstruction that might give prejudice thereunto, we shall take leave to premise,

1. That when we read of the Son of God, as dependent on the Father, inferior and obedient to him; and yet, as being equal with him, and having the same divine nature, we cannot conceive of any character which answers to all these *Ideas* of sonship, unless that of a Mediator. If we consider the properties of sonship among men, every one, who stands in this relation to a Father, is dependent on him. In this respect, the

Father is the cause of his Son, and it is not like other productions, for no effect can, properly speaking, be called a Son, but that which hath the same kind of nature with his Father; and the relation of sonship always connotes inferiority, and an obligation to yield obedience. I do not apply this, in every respect, to the sonship of Christ, which no similitude, taken from mere creatures, can sufficiently illustrate; but his character, as Mediator, seems to answer to it, more than any thing else that can be said of him, since he has, as such, the same individual nature with the Father, and also is inferior to, and dependent on him. As a Son, among men, is inferior to, and dependent on, his Father, and, as the prophet speaks, *Mal. i. 6. Honour-eth his Father*; so whatever Christ is, as Mediator, he receives it from the Father, and, in all that he does, he *honoureth his Father*, as he says, *John viii. 49. As the whole work of redemption is refer'd to the Father's glory, and the commission, by which he acts as Mediator, is received from the Father, so, as a Son, he refers all the glory thereof to him*.

2. This account of Christ's sonship does not take away any argument, by which we prove his deity; for when we consider him as Mediator, we always suppose him to be both God and man, which is what we intend when we speak of the Person of Christ in this respect; so that, as God, he is equal with the Father, and has an equal right to divine adoration. This belongs to him as much, when consider'd as Mediator, as it can be supposed to do, if we consider his sonship in any other respect.

3. It does not take away any argument to prove his distinct personality from the Father and Holy Ghost, or, at least, if it sets aside that which is taken from the dependance of his personality on the Father, as received from him by communication, it substitutes another in the room of it, inasmuch as to be a Mediator, is, without doubt, a personal character; and because neither the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, can be said to be Mediators, it implies, that his personality is distinct from theirs; likewise his acting as Mediator from the Father; and the Holy Spirit's securing the glory which arises to him from hence, and applying the redemption purchased by him, is a farther proof of this distinction of the Persons in the God-head.

4. Since

4. Since we consider the Mediator as both God and man, in one Person, we do not suppose that this character respects either of his two natures consider'd separately.

(1.) Not his divine nature. 'Tis true, that his having the same nature with the Father, might be reckon'd, by some, a character of sonship, as it contains one ingredient in the common *Idea* that we have thereof among men, they, as sons, are said to have the same kind of nature with their fathers; so our Saviour's having the same individual nature with the Father, might give occasion to some to denominate him, for that reason, his Son; but though this may be the foundation of his being called God's *proper Son*, *ἰδιος υἱός*, yet this is not his distinguishing character as a Son; for it would follow from hence, that the Holy Ghost, who has the same nature with the Father, would, for the same reason, be called his Son, which is contrary to the scripture account given of him, as proceeding from the Father and the Son.

(2.) This character of Christ, as God-man, Mediator, does not respect his human nature, consider'd separately from his divine, nor any of those peculiar honours confer'd upon it, beyond what any mere creatures are made partakers of.

This leads us to consider the difference between this notion of his sonship, and that which was generally assign'd, as the reason of his being so called by the *Socinians*; these, generally speak of Christ, as being denominated the Son of God, because of the extraordinary and miraculous conception, or formation, of his human nature in the womb of the Virgin; and for this they refer to that scripture in *Luke i. 35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* The sense, in which they understand this text, is, that Christ is called the Son of God, because of this extraordinary event; but we cannot think that a miraculous production is a sufficient foundation to support this character, and therefore must conclude, that the glory of Christ's sonship is infinitely greater than what arises from thence: therefore, I humbly conceive, that that scripture is to be understood, with a small variation of the translation, in this sense, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c. because that Holy Thing, which shall be*

born of thee, shall be called, as he really is, *the Son of God*; that is, he is as Mediator, an extraordinary Person appointed to execute a glorious office, the Godhead and the manhood being to be united together, upon which account he is called the Son of God; and therefore it is expedient that the formation of his human nature should be in an extraordinary way, to wit, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Again, there is a very wide difference between our account of Christ's sonship, as Mediator, and theirs, as taken from this scripture, in that they suppose that his being called the Son of God, refers only to some dignities confer'd upon him, whom they suppose to be no more than a man; this is infinitely below the glory, which we ascribe to him, as Mediator, since their *Idea* of him, as such, how extraordinary soever his conception was, argues him to be no more than a creature; but ours, as has been before observed, proves him a divine Person, since we never speak of him, as Mediator, without including both natures.

Having premised these things, to explain our sense of Christ's being called the Son of God, as Mediator, we proceed to prove this from scripture. And here we are not under a necessity of straining the sense of a few scriptures, to make them speak agreeably to this notion of Christ's sonship; but, I think, we have the whole scripture, whenever it speaks of Christ, as the Son of God, as giving countenance to this plain sense thereof; so that I cannot find one place, in the whole New Testament, in which Christ is called the Son of God: but it is, with sufficient evidence, proved, from the context, that it is applied to him, as Mediator. And here we shall refer to several scriptures, in which he is so consider'd; thus that scripture before mentioned, in *Matt. xvi. 16.* where Peter confesses, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*; in which, speaking of him as Christ, or the Mediator, that is, the Person who was invested in the office, and came to perform the work of a Mediator, he is, in this respect, *the Son of the living God*; so when the High Priest ask'd our Saviour, *Matt. xxvi. 63. Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?* that is, art thou the Messiah, as thou art supposed to be by thy followers? Our Saviour, in *Ver. 64.* replied to him, *Thou hast said*, that is, it is as thou hast said; and then he describes himself in another

Scripture-Proofs of CHRIST's Sonship as Mediator. 129

ther character, by which he is often represented, viz. as Mediator, and speaks of the highest degree of his mediatorial glory to which he shall be advanced at his second coming, Ver. 64. *Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* And, doubtless, the Centurion, and they who were with him, when they confess'd that *he was the Son of God*, in *Matt. xxvii. 54.* understood by it, that he was the Messiah, or the Christ, which is a character by which he was most known, and which had been supported by so many miracles, and was now confirm'd by this miracle of the earthquake, which gave him this conviction; also in *Luke iv. 41.* when the devils are represented as crying out, *Thou art Christ, the Son of God*, it follows, that *they knew that he was Christ*; so that the commonly received notion of our Saviour's sonship, was, that he was the Christ; and in *John xi. 4.* when Jesus says concerning *Lazarus*, that *his sickness was not unto death*, that is, not such as that he should continue in the state of the dead, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby; the meaning is, that he might give a proof of his being the Christ, by raising him from the dead; therefore when he speaks to *Martha*, with a design to try whether she believed he could raise her brother from the dead, and represents himself to her, as the object of faith, she replies, Ver. 27. *I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* Again, 'tis said, in *Acts ix. 20.* that *Saul*, when converted, *preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God*, that is, he proved him to be the Messiah; and accordingly, Ver. 22. when he was establishing the same doctrine, it is said, that *he proved that he was the very Christ.*

Moreover, our Saviour is farther described, in scripture, as executing some of his mediatorial offices, or as having received a commission to execute them from the Father, or as having some branches of mediatorial glory confer'd upon him, at the same time that he is called the Son of God, which gives us ground to conclude, that this is the import of his sonship. Thus we read, *Heb. iv. 14.* that *we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God*; and, in *John i. 29.* *John* the Baptist gives a publick testimony to him, as sustaining such a character, which be-

longs to him, as Mediator, when he says, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*; and afterwards, referring to the same character, he says, Ver. 34. *I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God*; and, at another time, he gives a noble testimony to him, as God-man, Mediator, *John iii. 29.* &c. when he calls him, *The Bridegroom which bath the bride*, that is, who is related to, and has a propriety in, his church, and that *he testifies what he has seen and heard*, and that 'tis *he whom God hath sent, who speaks the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*; and then, as a farther explication hereof, he says, Ver. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* This is, in effect, the same, as when he is called elsewhere, *his beloved Son*; and, in *Heb. iii. 6.* Christ is said to be *a Son over his own house, whose house are we*; which denotes not only his propriety in his church, but his being the Head thereof, as Mediator; and the Apostle, *1 Thess. i. 10.* speaks of him, as *the Son of God, whom we are to wait for from heaven; whom he has raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come*; and, *Gal. ii. 20.* he speaks of the Son of God, as *one who loved him, and gave himself for him*; and, *Col. i. 13.* he is spoken of as *God's dear Son*, and, at the same time, as having a *kingdom*, into which his people are *translated*; and, in the following Verse, as the Person, in whom *we have redemption, through his blood, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature*; which seems to be taken in the same sense as when he is said, *Heb. i. 2.* to have been appointed *Heir of all things*, and so referring to him as God-man, Mediator.

Moreover, when he is consider'd as a Son, related to his Father; this appears, from the context, to be a description of him, as Mediator. Thus, *John xx. 17.* he says, *I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God*; that is, my Father, by whom I am constituted Mediator, and your Father, namely, the God who loves you for my sake: he is first my God, as he has honoured, loved, and glorified me; and then your God, as he is reconciled to you for my sake; so the Apostle says, *2 Cor. i. 3.* *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.*

Object. 1. In these scriptures, and others of the like nature, there are two

130 OBJECTIONS *against this Doctrine answer'd.*

Ideas contain'd; namely, one of our Saviour, as the Son of God, by eternal generation; the other of him, as Mediator; whereas, we suppose that one contains only an explication of the other.

Ans. If Christ's sonship, in the sense in which 'tis generally explain'd, were sufficiently proved, from other scriptures, which take no notice of his mediatorial character, or works, or could be accounted for, without being liable to the difficulties before mentioned; and, if his character, as Mediator, did not contain in it an *Idea* of personality, the objection would have more weight than otherwise it seems to have.

Object. 2. 'Tis said, *Gal. iv. 4.* God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; therefore he was the Son of God before he was sent into the world, when made of a woman, and under the law, that is, his Son by eternal generation.

Ans. The answer I would give to this objection is,

1. 'Tis not necessary to suppose that Christ had the character of a Son before he was sent, though he had that of a divine Person; since the words may, without any strain, or force, upon the sense thereof, be understood thus; when the fulness of time was come, in which the Messiah was expected, God sent him forth, or sent him into the world, with the character of a Son, at which time he was made of a woman, made under the law; the end whereof was, that he might redeem them that were under the law.

2. If we suppose Christ had the character of a Son before he was sent into the world, it will not overthrow our argument; since he was, by the Father's designation, an eternal Mediator, and, in this respect, God's eternal Son; and therefore he, who before was so by virtue of the eternal decree, is now actually sent, that he might be, and do, what he was, from all eternity, designed to be, and do: he was set up from everlasting, or appointed to be the Son of God; and now he is sent to perform the work which this character implies in it.

Object. 3. 'Tis farther objected, that his sonship is distinct from his being Mediator, inasmuch as 'tis said, *Heb. v. 8.* Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffer'd. Now

it cannot, in propriety of speech, be said, though he were Mediator, yet he learned obedience, since he was under an obligation to obey, and suffer, as Mediator; therefore the meaning must be, though he were a Son, by eternal generation, yet he condescended to put himself into such a capacity, as that he was obliged to obey, and suffer, as Mediator.

Ans. The stress of the objection lies in the word, which we render *though*, *Kai per en uids, &c.* which may be render'd, with a small variation, *though being a Son*, he learned obedience by the things he suffer'd; *but being made perfect*, viz. after his sufferings, he became the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that obey him, and then it takes away the force of the objection; however, I see no absurdity if it be render'd, as 'tis in the *vulgar Latin Version*, *And, indeed, being a Son, he learned obedience*^h; and then it proves the argument we are endeavouring to defend, *q. d.* 'tis agreeable to the character of a son to learn obedience, it was with this view that it was confer'd upon him, and in performing obedience, and suffering as Mediator, and thereby securing the glory of the divine perfections in bringing about the work of our redemption, he acted in pursuance of that character.

Object. 4. It will be farther objected, that what we have said concerning the sonship of Christ, as refer'd to his being Mediator, has some consequences attending it, which seem derogatory to his Person; particularly, it will follow from hence, that had not man fallen, and stood in need of a Mediator, our Saviour would not have had that character, and therefore never have been described as the Son of God, or worshipped as such; and our first parents, while in the state of innocence, knowing nothing of a Mediator, knew nothing of the sonship of Christ, and therefore could not give him the glory, which is the result thereof. Moreover, as God might have prevented the fall of man, or, when fallen, he might have refused to have recover'd him by a Mediator; so our Saviour might not have been the Son of God, that is, according to the foregoing explication thereof, a Mediator between God and man.

^h *Kai per* is used six times in the New Testament; in two or three of which Places it might be render'd, without deviating from the Sense of the respective Texts, *Et quidem*, as well as *quamvis*; and I see no Reason why the enclitic Particle *per*, being added to *kai*, should always, without Exception, alter the Sense thereof, any more than when 'tis join'd to *es*, *en*, or *ei*. And whereas I render *kai*, in Ver. 9. *But*, instead of *And*, that may be justified by several Scriptures, where 'tis so render'd; as *Luke vii. 35. Matt. xii. 39. Acts x. 28. 1 Cor. xvi. 12.*

Ans. This objection may be very easily answer'd, and the charge of Christ's mediatorialship being derogatory to his glory, removed, which, that we may do, let it be consider'd,

1. That we allow, that had not man fallen, our Saviour would not have been a Mediator between God and man; and the commonly received notion is true, that his being a Mediator, is, by divine ordination and appointment, according to the tenor of several scriptures relating thereunto; and I see no absurdity in asserting, that his character, as the Son of God, or Mediator, is equally the result of the divine will, or decree. But this, I hope, if duly consider'd, will not contain the least diminution of his glory, when we farther assert,

2. That though our Saviour had not sustain'd this character if man had not fallen, or if God had not design'd to bring about the work of redemption by him, yet he would have been no less a distinct Person in the Godhead, but, as such, would have had a right to divine glory; this appears from what hath been before said, concerning his personality, being equally necessary with his deity, which, if it be not communicated to him, certainly it has not the least appearance of its being the result of the divine will; and, indeed, his divine personality is the only foundation of his right to be adored, and not his being invested in an office, which only draws forth, or occasions our adoration. When we speak of Christ's being adored as Mediator, it is his divine personality, which is included in that character, that renders him the object of adoration, and not his taking the human nature, or being, or doing what he was, or did, by divine appointment; and I question whether they, who assert that he had the divine nature, or personality, communicated to him, will lay the stress of his right to divine adoration, on its being communicated, but on his having it, abstracting from his manner of having it; so when we speak of Christ as Mediator, it is his having the divine glory, or personality, which is included in that character, that renders him the object of adoration; therefore if man had not fallen, and Christ had not been Mediator, he would have had a right to divine glory, as a Person in the Godhead; and I doubt not but that our first parents, before they fell, had an intimation hereof, and adored him as such; so that if

Christ had not been Mediator, it would only follow from thence, that he would not have had the character of a Son, but he would, notwithstanding, have had the glory of a divine Person; for though his sonship be the result of the divine will, his personality is not so.

Having enquired into the sense of those scriptures which treat of the sonship of Christ, we shall next consider those that are generally brought to prove the procession of the Holy Ghost; the principal of which, as has been before observed, are in *John* xiv. 26. and Chap. xv. 26. and xvi. 7. in which he is said *to proceed from the Father*, or to be *sent by the Father in Christ's name*, or to be *sent by the Son*. We have already consider'd the most commonly received sense hereof, as including in it an eternal procession, *viz.* the communication of the divine essence, or personality, to him, as distinguished from the eternal generation of the Son; but now we shall enquire whether there may not be another sense given of these scriptures, agreeable to the analogy of faith, that may be acquiesced in by those, who cannot so well understand, or account for, the common sense given thereof, which, I humbly conceive, is this: that the Spirit is consider'd not with respect to the manner of his subsisting, but with respect to the subserviency of his acting, to set forth the Mediator's glory, and that of the Father that sent him. I chuse to call it a subserviency of acting, without connoting any inferiority in the agent; or if we suppose that it argues any inferiority in the Holy Spirit, this is only an inferiority in acting, as the works that he does are subservient to the glory of the Mediator, and of the Father, though his divine personality is, in all respects, equal with theirs. This explication of these texts is allow'd of by many, if not by most, of those who defend the doctrine of the Trinity, notwithstanding their maintaining another notion of the Spirit's procession from the Father and the Son, from all eternity, in the sense before consider'd. I need only refer to that explication which a great and learned divine gives of these, and such-like texts, notwithstanding his adhering, in other respects, to the common mode of speaking, relating to the eternal generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost. His words are these: "All that discourse which we have of the *Mission*, and sending of the Holy Ghost, and

¹ See Dr. Owen against Biddle, p. 362.

132 *The Oeconomy of the Persons in the Godhead explain'd.*

“ his proceeding and coming forth from
 “ the Father and Son, for the ends specified, *John* xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and
 “ xvi. 7, 13. concerns not at all the
 “ *eternal Proceſſion* of the Holy Ghost
 “ from the Father and Son, as to his
 “ diſtinct *Perſonality* and ſubſiſtance,
 “ but belongs to that *Oeconomy*, or diſpenſation of miniſtry, that the whole
 “ *Trinity* proceedeth in, for the accompliſhment of the work of our ſalvation.”

Now if theſe ſcriptures, which are the chief in all the New Teſtament, on which this doctrine is founded, are to be taken in this ſenſe, how ſhall we find a ſufficient proof, from other ſcriptures, of the proceſſion of the Holy Ghost in any other ſenſe? Therefore, that we may farther explain this doctrine, let us conſider, that whatever the Son, as Mediator, has purchaſed, as being ſent by the Father for that end, is applied by the Holy Ghost, who therefore acts in ſubſerviency to them. This is generally called, by divines, the *Oeconomy* of the Perſons in the Godhead, which, becauſe it is a word that we often uſe, when we conſider the diſtinct works of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in their reſpective ſubſerviency to one another, we ſhall take occaſion briefly to explain, and ſhew how it may be applied to them in that reſpect, without infering any inferiority as to what concerns their perſonal glory. We ſhall ſay nothing concerning the derivation, or uſe, of the word *Oeconomy*, though we cannot forbear to mention, with indignation, the ſenſe which ſome of the oppoſers of the bleſſed Trinity have given of it, while, laying aſide all the rules of decency and reverence, which this ſacred myſtery calls for, they repreſent us, as ſpeaking of the family government of the divine Perſons, which is the moſt invidious ſenſe they could put upon the word, and moſt remote from our deſign in the uſe of it. Now that we may explain and apply it to our preſent purpoſe, let it be conſider'd,

1. That all thoſe works, which are the effects of the divine power, or ſovereign will, are performed by all the Perſons in the Godhead, and attributed to them in ſcripture; the reaſon whereof is very evident, namely, becauſe the power and will of God, and all other divine perfections, belong equally, and alike, to the Father, Son, and Spirit: if therefore that which produces theſe effects belongs to them, then the effects

produced muſt be equally aſcribed to them; ſo that the Father is no more ſaid to create and govern the world, or to be the Author of all grace, and the Fountain of bleſſedneſs, than the Son and Spirit.

2. Nevertheless, ſince the Father, Son, and Spirit, are diſtinct Perſons, and ſo have diſtinct perſonal conſiderations in acting, it is neceſſary that their perſonal glory ſhould be demonſtrated, or made known to us, that our faith and worſhip may be fix'd on, and directed to them, in a diſtinct manner, as founded thereon.

3. This diſtinction of the Perſons in the Godhead cannot be known, as their eternal power or deity is ſaid to be, by the works of creation and providence, it being a doctrine of pure revelation; therefore,

4. We are given to underſtand, in ſcripture, when it treats of the great work of our ſalvation, that it is attributed firſt to the Father, then to the Son, as Mediator, receiving a commiſſion from him to redeem and ſave his people, and then to the Holy Ghost, acting in ſubſerviency thereunto; this is what we are to underſtand when we ſpeak of the diſtinct oeconomy of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which I cannot better expreſs than by conſidering of it as a divine determination, that the perſonal glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, ſhould be demonſtrated in ſuch a way. Now, to inſtance in ſome particular acts, or works; when a divine Perſon is repreſented in ſcripture as doing, or determining to do, any thing relating to the work of our redemption, or ſalvation, by another divine Perſon, who muſt, for that reaſon, be conſider'd herein, as Mediator, 'tis to be underſtood of the Father, in this oeconomic ſenſe, inasmuch as, by this means, he declares, or demonſtrates, his perſonal glory: thus 'tis ſaid, *Eph.* i. 4, 5. *He, i. e. the Father, hath choſen us in him, namely, the Son; and He is ſaid to have predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt.* Tho' election and predeſtination are alſo applied to the Son and Spirit, when they have another reference correſponding with the demonſtration of their perſonal glory, yet, in this place, they are only applied to the Father. And there are ſeveral other ſcriptures, in which things done are particularly applied to the Father for the ſame reaſon. Thus, *2 Cor.* v. 18, 19. 'tis ſaid, *God hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and that he was in Chriſt, reconciling the world to himſelf;* and,

Distinct Works how ascrib'd to the Father, Son and Spirit. 133

and in 1 Cor. i. 30. 'tis said, *Of him, namely, the Father, are ye in Christ Jesus, who, of God, that is, the Father, is made unto us wisdom, &c.* in which, and several other scriptures to the same purpose, the Father is, in a peculiar manner, intended, because consider'd, as no other divine Person is, as acting by the Mediator, or as glorifying the perfections of the divine nature, which belong to him, by what this great Mediator did by his appointment.

Moreover, when a divine Person is consider'd as acting in subserviency to the Father's glory, or executing a commission relating to the work of redemption, which he had received from him, and accordingly performing any act of obedience in an human nature assumed by him for that purpose, this is peculiarly applied to, and designed to demonstrate the Son's personal character, as belonging to no other Person in the Godhead but him: of this, we have several instances in scripture; thus tho' to judge the world be a branch of the divine glory, which is common to all the Persons in the Godhead; yet there are some circumstances in the character of a divine Person in particular, who is denominated as Judge of quick and dead, that are applicable to none but the Son; and so we are to understand that scripture, *John v. 22. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son*; that is, the Son is the only Person in the Godhead who displays his mediatorial character and glory, as the Judge of the whole world; yet when there is another personal character ascribed to God, as the Judge of all; or when he is said to *judge the world in righteousness, by that Man*, to wit, our Lord Jesus, *whom he hath ordained*, as in *Acts xvii. 31*. then this personal character determines that it belongs to him in particular.

Again, to give eternal life is a divine prerogative, and consequently belongs to all the Persons in the Godhead; yet when a divine Person is said to give eternal life to a people, that were given to him for that purpose, and to have received power, or authority, from another, to confer this privilege as Mediator, then 'tis peculiarly applied to the Son: thus *John xvii. 2. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*.

Moreover, when a divine Person is said to do any thing in subserviency to the Mediator; or as 'tis said, in *John xvi. 14. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of*

mine, and shall shew it unto you, this is peculiarly applied to the Spirit. So when he is said to give his testimony to the mission, or work of the Mediator, by any divine works perform'd by him, this is peculiarly applied to him; or when he is said to sanctify and comfort, or to seal and confirm believers unto the day of redemption. Though these being divine works, are, for that reason, applicable to all the Persons in the Godhead; yet when he is said to perform them in a way of subserviency to Christ, as having purchased them, then his distinct personal character, taken from thence, is demonstrated, and so these works are more especially applied to him. This is what we understand by that peculiar oeconomy, or dispensation, which determines us to give distinct personal glory to each of the Persons in the Godhead.

And now we are speaking of the Spirit, consider'd as acting, whereby he sets forth his personal glory, we may observe, that, in compliance with this way of speaking, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, are, by a metonymy, called the *Spirit*, as in *Acts xix. 2*. when 'tis said, *Have ye received the Holy Ghost? They said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*. We are not to understand it as tho' they had not heard whether there were such a Person as the Holy Ghost; but they had not heard that there was such an extraordinary dispensation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost confer'd on men; so *John vii. 39*. 'tis said, *The Holy Ghost was not yet given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified; the word *Given* being supplied in our translation, and not in the original; it ought rather to be render'd, *The Holy Ghost was not as yet*; by which we are to understand the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and not his personality, which was from all eternity.

And here we may farther observe, that when the Holy Ghost is spoken of as a Person, that word which denotes his personality, ought not to be render'd *It*, but *He*, as expressive of his personal character; but when 'tis taken in a figurative sense, for the gifts or graces of the Spirit, then it should be translated *It*. This is sometimes observed; as in *John xvi. 13*. 'tis said of the Spirit, *He will guide you into all truth*, where the personal character of the Spirit is expressly mention'd, as it ought to be: but this is not duly observed in every scripture; thus, *Rom. viii. 16*. 'tis said, *The Spirit it self beareth witness*, which ought to have been render'd

der'd *Himself*; as also in *Ver. 26. The Spirit it self maketh intercession for us.* The same ought to be observed in all other scriptures, whereby we may be led to put a just difference between the Spirit, consider'd as a divine Person; or as acting, or producing, those effects, which are said to be wrought by him.

Thus concerning the sonship of Christ, and the procession of the Holy Ghost. What I have said, in attempting to explain those scriptures that treat of the Person of Christ, as God-man, Mediator, and of his inferiority, in that respect, or as he is said to sustain that character, to the Father; as also those which speak of the subserviency of the Spirit, in acting to the Father and the Son, does not, as I apprehend, run counter to the common faith of those who have defended the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity; therefore I hope that when I call one the sonship of Christ, and the other the procession of the Holy Ghost, this will not be deemed a new and strange doctrine. And I cannot but persuade my self, that what I have said concerning the Mediator, as acting in obedience to the Father and the Spirit, in subserviency to him, will not be contested by those who defend the doctrine of the Trinity; and, if I have a little varied from the common way of speaking, I hope none will be offended at the acceptation of a word, especially since I have endeavoured to defend my sense thereof, by referring to many scriptures. And, if I cannot give into the common explication of the eternal generation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, I am well satisfied I do no more than what many Christians do, who have received the doctrine of the Trinity from the scripture, and are unacquainted with those modes of speaking which are used in the schools: these appear as much to dislike them, when used in publick discourses about this doctrine, as any other can do, what has been attempted to explain it in a different way.

IV. We shall now proceed to consider the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as maintained in one of the *Answers* we are explaining, by four general heads of Argument.

I. From those divine names which are given to them, that are peculiar to God alone.

II. From their having the divine at-

tributes ascribed to them, and consequently the divine nature.

III. From their having manifested their divine glory, by those works that none but God can perform.

IV. From their having a right to divine worship, which none but God is worthy to receive.

If these things be made to appear, we have all that we need contend for; and it will be evident from thence, that the Son and Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father. These heads of argument we shall apply to them distinctly; and,

First, To the Son, who appears to be God equal with the Father.

I. From those divine names given to him, that are peculiar to God alone. And here we shall premise something concerning the use of names given to persons, together with the design thereof. Names are given to persons, as well as things, with a twofold design.

1. Sometimes nothing else is intended thereby, but to distinguish one from another, in which sense the names given are not in themselves significant, or expressive of any property, or quality, in those that are so described. Thus most of those names we read of in scripture, though not all of them, are designed only to distinguish one man from another, which is the most common use and design thereof; notwithstanding,

2. They are sometimes given to signify some property in those to whom they are applied, *viz.* what they should be, or do. Thus we have many instances, in scripture, of persons called by names, which have had some special signification annexed to them, assigned as a reason of their being so called. Thus *Adam* had that name given him, because made of earth; and *Eve* was so called, because she was the mother of all living. The same may be said concerning *Seth*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Samuel*, and several others, whose respective names have a signification annex'd to them, agreeable to the proper sense of the words, and the design of their being so called.

And, to apply this to our present purpose, we may conclude, that when names are given to any divine Person, they are designed to express some excellency and perfection belonging to him; and

and therefore we shall have sufficient reason to conclude the Son to be a divine Person, if we can make it appear that he has those names given to him in scripture, which are proper to God alone. And,

I. The name *Jehovah* is given to him, which is peculiar to God. Here we shall prove, *First*, that the name *Jehovah* is peculiar to God. And, *Secondly*, that it is ascribed to Christ.

(I.) That the name *Jehovah* is peculiar to God, whereby he is distinguished from all creatures: thus it is said, *Isai. xlii. 8. I am the Lord, or Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another*; or, as the text may be rendered, *I am Jehovah, that name of mine, and my glory, which is signified thereby, will I not give to another*; therefore it follows, that it is an incommunicable name of God: and when he says, *I will not give it to another*, it supposes that it necessarily belongs to him; and therefore that he cannot give it to another, since that would be unbecoming himself; therefore this name, which is expressive of his glory in so peculiar a manner, is never given to any creature.

There are other scriptures to this purpose, in which the name *Jehovah* is represented, as peculiar to God. Thus when the prophet *Amos* had been speaking of the glory of God, as display'd in the works of creation and providence, he adds, that *the Lord, or Jehovah, is his name*, Chap. v. 8. So that those works, which are peculiar to God, might as well be applied to creatures, as that name *Jehovah*, which is agreeable thereunto. And in Chap. ix. 6. the prophet gives another magnificent description of God, with respect to those works that are peculiar to him, when he says, *It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth*; and then he adds, *the Lord, or Jehovah, is his name*.

Again, it is said, in *Psal. lxxxiii. 18. That men may know, that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth*. This is never said of any other divine names, which are, in a limited sense, sometimes given to creatures; and, indeed, all creatures are expressly excluded from having a right hereunto.

Again, there are other scriptures, in which this name *Jehovah* is applied to God, and an explication thereof subjoin'd, which argues that it is peculiar to

him. Thus when *Moses* desired of God, that he would let him know what *his name* was, for the encouragement of the faith of the *Israelites*, to whom he sent him, *Exod. iii. 13. q. d. he desires to know, what are those divine glories, that would render him the object of faith and worship; or how he might describe him in such a way to the children of Israel, whereby they might express that reverence and regard to him, that was due to the great God, who sent him about so important an errand. In answer to which God says, Ver. 14. I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you*; which description of him doth not set forth one single perfection, but all the perfections of the divine nature; as tho' he should say, *I am a God of infinite perfection*. And then he adds, in the following Verse, *Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, The Lord, or Jehovah, the God of your fathers, hath sent me unto you*; where *Jehovah* signifies the same with *I AM THAT I AM*. And he adds, *This is my memorial unto all generations*; therefore this glorious name is certainly peculiar to God!

What has been already observed, under this head, is sufficient to prove that the name *Jehovah* is proper to God alone. But we might hereunto add another argument, of less weight, which, though we do not lay that stress upon, as though it was sufficient of it self to prove this matter; yet, being added to what has been already suggested, it may not be improper to be mention'd; *viz.* that the word *Jehovah* has no plural number, as being never design'd to signify any more than the one God; neither has it any emphatical particle affix'd to it, as other words in the *Hebrew* language have; and particularly several of the other names of God, which distinguishes him from others, who have those names sometimes applied to them; and the reason of this is, because the name *Jehovah* is never given to any creature.

And to this we might add, that since the *Jews* best understood their own language, they may, in some respects, be depended on, as to the sense they give of the word *Jehovah*; and it is certain they paid the greatest regard to this name, even to superstition. Accordingly, they would never pronounce it; but, instead thereof, use some other expressions, by which they describe it. Sometimes they call it, *that name, or that glorious name,*

136 The Name JEHOVAH whether ever given to Creatures.

or that name that is not to be express'd^k; by which they mean, as *Josephus* says^l, that it was not lawful for them to utter it, or, indeed, to write it, which, if any one presumed to do, they reckoned him not only guilty of profaneness, in an uncommon degree, but even of blasphemy; and therefore it is never found in any writings of human composition among them. The modern *Jews*, indeed, are not much to be regarded, as retaining the same veneration for this name; but *Onkelos*, the author of the *Chaldee* paraphrase on some parts of scripture, who lived about fifty years after our Saviour's time, and *Jonathan Ben-Uzziel*, who is supposed to have lived as many years before it, never insert it in their writings; and, doubtless, they were not the first that entertained these sentiments about it, but had other writings then extant, which gave occasion thereunto. Some critics conclude, from *Jewish* writers, that it was never pronounced, even in the earliest ages of the church, except by the High Priest; and when he was obliged, by the divine law, to pronounce it, in the form of benediction, the people always expressed an uncommon degree of reverence, either by bowing, or prostration; but this is not supported by sufficient evidence. Others think it took its rise soon after their return from captivity, which is more probable; however, the reason they assign for it is, because they reckon'd it God's incommunicable name.

And here I cannot but observe, that the translators of the *Greek* version of the Old Testament, commonly called the LXX. which, if it be not altogether the same with that mention'd by *Aristæus*, which was compiled almost three hundred years before the Christian Æra, is, without doubt, of considerable antiquity; these never translate the word JEHOVAH, but, instead thereof, put Κύριος, Lord^m; and, even when it seems absurd not to do it, as in *Exod.* vi. 3. when it is said, by my name, JEHOVAH, was I not known, they render it, by my name, the LORD, was I not knownⁿ.

This we take occasion to observe, not as supposing it is a sufficient proof of itself, of the argument we are maintaining, but as it corresponds with the sense of those scriptures before mentioned, by which it appears that this is the proper, or incommunicable, name of God.

Object. It is objected, by the Antitrinitarians, that the name *Jehovah* is sometimes given to creatures, and consequently that it is not God's proper name; nor does it evince our Saviour's deity, when given to him. To prove that it is sometimes given to creatures, they refer to several scriptures; as *Exod.* xvii. 15. where the altar that *Moses* erected is call'd *Jehovah Nissi*, i. e. the Lord is my banner; and, in *Judges* vi. 24. another altar that *Gideon* built is called, *Jehovah Shalom*; and, *Gen.* xxii. 14. 'tis said, that *Abraham* called the name of the place, in which he was ready to offer *Isaac*, *Jehovah Fireh*; and, in *Ezek.* xlvi. 35. 'tis said, that *Jerusalem*, from that day, should be called *Jehovah Shammah*; they add also, that the *Ark* was called *Jehovah*, upon the occasion of its being carried up into the city of *David*, when it is said, *Psal.* xlvii. 5. *The Lord, i. e. Jehovah, is gone up with a shout, even the Lord with the sound of a trumpet*, and also on other occasions. And the name *Jehovah* is often, in the Old Testament, given to Angels, and therefore not proper to God alone.

Answer. 1. When they pretend that the name *Jehovah* was given to inanimate things, and in particular to altars, as in the instance mentioned in the objection, that one of the altars was indeed called *Jehovah Nissi*; but it is very unreasonable to suppose, that the name and glory of God was put upon it; had it been a symbol of God's presence, it would not have been called by this name, especially in the same sense in which our Saviour and the Holy Spirit have it applied to them; and therefore the meaning of this scripture, as I apprehend, is nothing but this, that there was an inscription written on the altar, containing these words, *Jehovah Nissi*; the design whereof was to signify, to the faith of those that came to wor-

^k ὄνομα ἀνεκφώνητον.

^l Antiq. Lib. III. Chap. 5.

^m This the Holy Ghost has condescended, for what Reason I know not, to give Countenance to, in all those Quotations in the New Testament, where the Name, JEHOVAH, is refer'd to from the Old.

ⁿ In two Places, indeed, it is render'd by Θεός, God, *Gen.* iv. 1. and *Isai.* liv. 13. And there is one Place in which some think they attempt a literal Translation of it, 2 *Sam.* i. 12. where, instead of the People of the Lord, they translate the Text, ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν Ἰουδα, in which, some think, Ἰουδα is put for Ἰούδα, or Ἰούδα, through the Mistake of some Amanuensis; but it seems rather to be an Explication than a literal Translation of the Words; and whereas some think, the Reason of this Method used by them in their Translation, is, because the *Hebrew* Letters, of which that Name consists, cannot well be express'd by the Letters of the *Greek* Alphabet, so as to compose a Word like it, that does not seem to be the Reason of it, inasmuch as they attempt to translate other Names equally difficult; as in *Gen.* x. 2. Ἰαβάν for *Javan*; and 2 *Kings* xii. 2. Ἰωδαί for *Jehoiada*.

ship there, that the Lord was their banner: therefore this name, strictly speaking, was not given to the altar, but to God, upon which some, not without good reason, render the words; he built an altar, and called the name of it, the altar of *Jehovah Nissi*. The same may be said with respect to the altar erected by Gideon, which was called *Jehovah Shalom*, or the altar of *Jehovah Shalom*, to the end that all who came to offer sacrifice upon it, might hereby be put in mind that God was a God of peace, or would give peace to them.

2. As for the place to which *Abraham* went to offer *Isaac*, which is called, *Jehovah Fireh*, it was the mount *Moriah*; and 'tis certain, that this was not known by, or, whenever spoken of, mentioned, as having that name; neither had *Abraham* any right to apply to it any branch of the divine glory, as signify'd thereby; therefore when it is said, he called the name of the place *Jehovah Fireh*, it is as though he should have said, let all that travel over this mountain know, that the Lord was seen, or provided a ram instead of *Isaac*, who was ready to be offer'd up; let this place be remarkable, in future ages, for this amazing dispensation of providence, and let them glorify God for what was done here, and let the memory hereof be an encouragement to their faith. Or else we may farther consider him speaking as a prophet, and so the meaning is, this place shall be very remarkable in future ages, as it shall be the mount of vision; here *Jehovah* will eminently appear in his temple, which shall be built in this place. Or, if you take the words in another sense, viz. *God will provide*, 'tis as though he should say, as God has provided a ram to be offer'd instead of *Isaac*, so he will provide the Lamb of God, who is to take away the sin of the world, which was typified by *Isaac's* being offer'd. So that the place was not really called *Jehovah*; but *Abraham* takes occasion, from what was done here, to magnify him, who appeared to him, and held his hand, whom alone he calls *Jehovah*.

And to this we may add, that when *Jerusalem* is called *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there, the meaning hereof is only this, that it shall eminently be said in succeeding Ages of the new *Jerusalem*, that the Lord is there; the city, which was commonly known by the name *Jerusalem*, is not called *Jehovah*, as though it had any character of divine glory put

upon it; but it implies, that the gospel church, which is signified thereby, should have the presence of God in an eminent degree; or, as our Saviour promised to his Disciples, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* that *he would be with them always, even unto the end of the world*; and, as the result thereof, that *the gates of hell should not prevail against it*, *Matt. xvi. 18.*

3. As for the ark; it was not called *Jehovah*, though the Psalmist takes occasion, from its being carried up into the city of *David*, with a joyful solemnity, and an universal shout, with the sound of a trumpet, to foretel the triumphant and magnificent ascension of our Saviour into heaven, which was typified hereby; concerning whom he says, *Jehovah* is gone up, or, speaking in a prophetick stile, the present, or time past, being put for the time to come, it is as though he should say, the Lord, when he has completed the work of redemption on earth, will ascend into heaven, which shall be the foundation of universal joy to the Church; and then he shall, as the Psalmist farther observes, *reign over the heathen, and sit on the throne of his holiness*.

Again, it does not appear that the ark was called *Jehovah*, in *Exod. xvi. 33. 34.* because, when *Aaron* is commanded to lay the pot full of manna before the testimony, that is, the ark, this is called, a laying it before *Jehovah*: But the reason of the expression is this; viz. God had ordain'd that the mercy-seat over the ark should be the immediate seat of his residence, from whence he would condescend to converse with men, and accordingly he is said, elsewhere, to dwell between the cherubims; and, upon this account, that which was laid up before the ark, might be said to be laid up before the Lord.

But since none are so stupid to suppose that inanimate things can have the divine perfections belonging to them, therefore the principal thing, contended for in this argument, is, that the ark was called *Jehovah*, because it was a sign and symbol of the divine presence; and from thence they conclude, that the name of God may be applied to a person that has no right to the divine glory, as the sign is called by the name of the thing signified thereby.

To which it may be answer'd, that the ark was not only a sacramental sign of God's presence, for that many other things relating to ceremonial worship were, but it was also the seat thereof: it

138 *Whether the Name JEHOVAH be applied to Angels.*

was therefore the divine Majesty who was called *Jehovah*, and not the place of his residence; and it was he alone to whom the glory was ascribed that is due to his name.

4. When it is farther objected, that the name *Jehovah* is often applied to Angels, the answer that may be given to this is; that it is never ascribed to any but him, who is called, by way of eminence, the Angel, or *Messenger of the covenant*, viz. our Saviour, *Mal. iii. 1.* And whenever it is given to him, such glorious things are spoken of him, or such acts of divine worship demanded by and given to him, as argue him to be a divine Person; as will plainly appear, if we consider what the Angel that appeared, in *Exod. iii.* says concerning himself, *Ver. 6. I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;* and it is said, *Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God;* and in *Verses 7, 8. The Lord, or Jehovah, said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and I am come down to deliver them;* and *Ver. 10. I will send thee unto Pharaoh;* and then, in the following *Verses*, he makes mention of his name, as of the great *Jehovah*, the *I AM*, who sent him. And *Jacob* gives divine worship to him, when he says, *Gen. xlviii. 16. The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.* I might refer to many other scriptures, where the Angel of the Lord is said to appear, in which, from the context, it is evident that it was a divine Person, and not a created Angel. The most ancient *Jewish* writers generally call him the *Word* ° of the Lord.

But this will not probably be deemed a sufficient answer to the objection, inasmuch as it is not denied, that the Person, who so frequently appeared in the form of an Angel, made use of such expressions, as can be applied to none but God; therefore they say that he personated God, or spake after the manner of his representative, not designing that the glory of the divine perfections should be ascribed to him, but to *Jehovah*, whom he represented.

To which it may be replied, that the Angel appearing to *Moses*, in the scripture before mentioned, and to several others, doth not signify himself to personate God, as doubtless he ought to have done, had he been only his representative, and not a divine Person; as an embassa-

dor, when he speaks in the name of the king, whom he represents, always uses such modes of speaking, as that he may be understood to apply what he says when personating him, not to himself, but to him that sent him; and it would be reckoned an affront to him, whom he represents, should he give occasion to any to ascribe the honour that belongs to his master to himself. Now there is nothing, in those texts, which speak of this Angel's appearing, that signifies his disclaiming divine honour, as what did not belong to him, but to God; therefore we must not suppose that he speaks in such a way as God doth, only as representing him: we read, indeed, in *Rev. xxii. 8, 9.* of a created Angel appearing to *John*, who was supposed by him, at the first, to be the same that appeared to the church of old, and accordingly *John* gave him divine honour; but he refused to receive it, as knowing that this character, of being the divine representative, would not be a sufficient warrant for him to assume it to himself; we must therefore from hence conclude, that the Angel that appeared to the church of old, and is called *Jehovah*, was a divine Person.

2. Having considered that the name *Jehovah* is peculiarly applied to God, we now proceed to prove that it is given to the Son, whereby his deity will appear; and the first scripture that we shall refer to is *Isai. xl. 3. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, or Jehovah, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God.* Now if we can prove that this is a prophecy of *John's* preparing the way of our Saviour, then it will appear that our Saviour, in this scripture, is called *Jehovah*; now that it is a prediction of *John's* being Christ's fore-runner, appointed to prepare the *Jews* for his reception, and to give them an intimation, that he, whom they had long looked for, would suddenly appear, is plain, from those scriptures in the New Testament, which expressly refer to this prediction, and explain it in this sense: thus *Matt. iii. 3. This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;* therefore he whose way *John* was to prepare, whom the prophet *Isaias* calls *Jehovah*, is our Saviour.

Again, it is said, in *Isa. viii. 13. Sanctify the Lord, or Jehovah, of Hosts*

himself,

* See Dr. *Allix's* Judgment of the *Jewish* Church against the *Unitarians*, Chap. XIII. to XVI.

himself, and let him be your fear and your dread; where he speaks of a person, whom he not only calls *Jehovah*, the Lord of Hosts, which alone would prove him to be a divine Person; but he farther considers him as the object of divine worship, *Sanctify him, and let him be your fear and your dread*. Certainly, if we can prove this to be spoken of Christ, it will be a strong and convincing argument to evince his proper deity; now that it is spoken of him, is very evident, if we compare it with the *Verse* immediately following, *And he shall be for a sanctuary*, which I would chuse to render, *For he shall be for a sanctuary*, as the Hebrew particle *Vau*, which we render *And*, is often render'd elsewhere, and so it is assigned as a reason why we should sanctify him; and then it follows, tho' we are obliged so to do, yet the *Jews* will not give that glory to him, for he will be *to them for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence*, as he shall be *for a sanctuary* to those that are faithful. That this is spoken of Christ, not only appears from the subject matter hereof, as it is only he that, properly speaking, is said to be a rock of offence, or in whom the world was offended, by reason of his appearing in a low condition therein; but, by comparing it with other scriptures, and particularly *Isai. xxviii. 16. Behold, I lay in Sion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste*, this will more evidently appear. In the latter of these scriptures, he is stiled, a foundation stone, the rock on whom his church is built; in the former a burthensome stone; and both these scriptures are refer'd to, and applied to him, *1 Pet. ii. 6, 8. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them that are disobedient*; where the Apostle proves plainly, that our Saviour is the Person who is spoken of, in both these texts, by the prophet *Isaiab*, and consequently that he is *Jehovah*, whom we are to sanctify, and to make our fear and our dread.

Again, there is another scripture, which plainly proves this, *viz. Numb. xxi. 5, 6, 7. And the people spake against God, and against Moses; and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died; therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken*

against the Lord, or Jehovah, and against thee. He, who is called God, in *Ver. 5.* whom they spake against, is called *Jehovah* in *Ver. 7.* who sent fiery serpents among them, that destroy'd them, for their speaking against him; now this is expressly applied to our Saviour by the Apostle, *1 Cor. x. 9. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroy'd of serpents*.

Again, the prophet *Isaiab*, having had a vision of the Angels adoring and ministering to that glorious Person, who is represented, as sitting on a throne, in *Chap. vi. 1, 2.* He reflects on what he had seen in *Verse 5.* and expresses himself in these words, *Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord, or Jehovah, of Hosts*. Now this is expressly applied to our Saviour, in *John xii. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him*; where it is plain that he intends this vision; as appears from the foregoing *Verse*, which refers to a part thereof, in which God foretells that he would blind the eyes, and harden the hearts of the unbelieving *Jews*; from whence it is evident, that the Person who appear'd to him, sitting on a throne, whom he calls *Jehovah*, was our Saviour.

Again, this may farther be argued, from what is said in *Isai. xlv. 21. to the end, There is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by my self, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*. This is a glorious proof of our Saviour's deity, not only from his being called *Jehovah*, but from several other divine characters ascribed to him: thus the Person, whom the prophet speaks of, stiles himself *Jehovah*, and adds, that there is no God besides me; and he is represented as swearing by himself, which none ought to do but a divine Person, and he encourages all the ends of the earth to look to him for salvation; so that if it can be made appear that this is spoken of our Saviour, it will be an undeniable proof of his proper deity, since nothing more can be said to express the glory of the Father than this.

Now

140 Christ's Deity prov'd from his being call'd JEHOVAH.

Now that these words are spoken of our Saviour, must be allowed by every one, who reads them impartially, for there are several things that agree with his character as Mediator; as when all the ends of the earth are invited to look to him for salvation. We have a parallel scripture, which is plainly applied to him, in *Isai. xi. 10.* *And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, that is, the Messiah, who should spring from the root or stock of Jesse; which shall stand for an ensign to the people, to it, or to him, shall the Gentiles seek, which is the same thing as for the ends of the earth to look to him; and besides, the word looking to him, is a metaphor, taken from a very remarkable type of this matter, to wit, Israel's looking to the brazen serpent for healing: thus he, who is here spoken of, is represented as a Saviour, and as the object of faith.*

Again, he is represented as swearing by himself; and the subject matter of this oath is, *That unto him every knee should bow, and every tongue should swear;* this is expressly applied to our Saviour, in the New Testament, as containing a prophecy of his being the Judge of the world, *Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.* *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God; so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* And the same words are used, with a little variation, in *Phil. ii. 10, 11.* *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Again, the Person, of whom the prophet speaks, is one against whom the world was incensed, which can be meant of none but Christ, as signifying the opposition that he should meet with, and the rage and fury that should be directed against him, when appearing in our nature.

Again, he is said to be one in whom we have righteousness, and in whom the seed of Israel shall be justified; which very evidently agrees with the account we have of him in the New Testament, as a Person by whose righteousness we are justified, or whose righteousness is imputed to us for that end.

And this leads us to consider another

scripture, *Jer. xlii. 6.* in which it is said, *This is his name, whereby he shall be called the Lord, or Jehovah, our righteousness.* His being called *our righteousness*, as was but now observed, implies, that the Messiah, our great Mediator, is the Person spoken of, who is called *Jehovah*. But this is farther evinced from the context, inasmuch as it is said, *Ver. 5.* *Behold the days come, viz. the gospel day, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; which any one, who judges impartially of the sense of scripture, will conclude to be spoken concerning our Saviour's erecting the gospel-dispensation, and being the sole Lord and Governor of his church. How the exercise of his dominion over it proves his deity, will be consider'd under a following head. All that we need to observe at present is, that this description is very agreeable to his character in scripture, as Mediator; therefore he is called Jehovah in this Verse.*

Object. 1. It is objected, that the words may be otherwise translated, *viz. This is the name, whereby the Lord our righteousness, namely, the Father, shall call him.*

Ans. It may be replied, that the Father is never called in scripture *our righteousness*, as was but now observed; this being a character peculiar to the Mediator, as it is fully explain'd in several places in the New Testament. As to what may be farther said, in answer to this objection, it is well known, that the *Hebrew* word ^p signifies either actively or passively, as it is differently pointed, the letters being the same; and we shall not enter into a critical disquisition concerning the origin, or authentickness of the *Hebrew* points, to prove that our translation is just, rather than that mention'd in the objection; but shall have recourse to the context to prove it. Accordingly it appears from thence, that if it were translated according to the sense of the objectors, it would be little less than a tautology, *q. d. I will raise to David a righteous branch; and this is the name whereby Jehovah, our righteousness, shall call him, viz. the Branch;* so that, at least, the sense of our translation of the text, seems more natural, as well as more agreeable, to the grammatical construction, observed in the *Hebrew* language, in which the words of a sentence are not so transposed as they are in the

Greek and Latin, which they are supposed to be, in the sense of the text contained in the objection.

Object. 2. It is farther objected; that though our translation of the text were just, and Christ were called *Jehovah*, yet it will not prove his deity, since it is said, in *Jer. xxxiii. 16.* speaking concerning the church, *This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord, or Jehovah, our righteousness.*

Ans. It is evident, from the context, that this is a parallel scripture with that before mentioned; the same Person, to wit, the Branch, is spoken of, and the same things predicted concerning the gospel-church, that was to be governed by him. Therefore, though it is plain that our translators understood this text, as spoken of the church of the *Jews*, or rather the gospel-church, as many others do: yet, if we consider the sense of the *Hebrew* words here used, it is very evident that they might, with equal, if not with greater propriety, have been render'd, *shall be called by her*; and so the sense is the same with that of the other but now mentioned; the Branch, to wit, our Saviour, is to be called, *the Lord our righteousness*, and adored as such by the church.

There is another scripture, in which our Saviour is called *Jehovah*, in *Joel ii. 27.* *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, viz. Jehovah, your God, and none else*; compared with *Ver. 32.* *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, viz. Jehovah, shall be deliver'd.* In both these *Verses*, it is evident that our Saviour is called *Jehovah*; for the Person, who is so called, in the former of them, is said, *Ver. 28.* *to pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, &c.* which scripture is expressly refer'd to him, in *Acts ii. 16, 17.* and this pouring out of his Spirit on all flesh, here predicted, is also applied, in *Ver. 32.* to him; *Therefore being, by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* The argument is therefore this: he who was, according to this prophecy, to *pour out his Spirit on all flesh*, is called *Jehovah*, your God; but this our Saviour is said to have done, therefore the name *Jehovah* is justly applied to him. As to the latter of these *Verses*, viz. *32.* *Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered*; this is also refer'd to, and explain'd, as

spoken of Christ, in *Rom. x. 13.* And that the Apostle here speaks of, calling on the name of Christ, is plain, from the foregoing and following *Verses*. In *Ver. 9.* it is express'd, by *confessing the Lord Jesus*, and it is there connected with salvation. And the Apostle proceeds to consider, that, in order to our *confessing*, or *calling on his name*, it is necessary that Christ should be preached, *Ver. 14, 15.* And he farther adds, in the following *Verses*, that though Christ was preached, and his glory proclaimed in the gospel, yet the *Jews* believed not in him, and consequently called not on his name; which was an accomplishment of what had been foretold by the prophet *Isaiah, Chap. liii. 1.* *Who hath believed our report, &c.* intimating, that it was predicted, that our Saviour should be rejected, and not be believed in by the *Jews*: so that it is very evident the Apostle is speaking concerning him, and applying to him what is mentioned in this scripture, in the prophecy of *Joel*, in which he is called *Jehovah*; therefore this glorious name belongs to him. Several other scriptures might have been refer'd to, to prove that Christ is called *Jehovah*, which are also applied to him in the New Testament, some of which may be occasionally mentioned under some following arguments: But, I think, what hath been already said is abundantly sufficient to prove his deity, from his having this glorious name given to him; which leads us to consider some other names given to him for the proof thereof; accordingly,

2. He is stiled *Lord* and *God*, in such a sense, as plainly proves his proper deity. We will not, indeed, deny that the names *Lord* or *God* are sometimes given to creatures; yet we are not left without sufficient light, whereby we may plainly discern when they are applied to the one living and true God, and when not. To assert the contrary, would be to reflect on the wisdom and goodness of God; and it would not only render those scriptures, in which they are contain'd, like the trumpet, that gives an uncertain sound, but we should be in the greatest danger of being led aside into a most destructive mistake, in a matter of the highest importance, and hereby be induced to give that glory to the creature, which is due to God alone; therefore we shall always find something, either in the text, or context, that evidently determines the sense of these

142 *The Names GOD and LORD how applied in Scripture.*

names, whenever they are applied to God, or the creature.

And here let it be observed, that whenever the word *God* or *Lord* is given to a creature, there is some diminutive character annex'd to it, which plainly distinguishes it from the true God: thus when 'tis given to idols, it is intimated, that they are so call'd, or falsely esteem'd, to be gods by their deceived worshippers; and so they are called strange gods^r, and molten gods^f, and new gods^t, and their worshippers are reproved as brutish and foolish^u.

Again, when the word *God* is applied to men, there is also something in the context, which implies, that whatever characters of honour are given to them, yet they are subject to the divine controul, as it is said^x, *God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods*; and they are at best but mortal men; *I have said, ye are gods, and all of you are children of the most high, but ye shall die like men*; they are, indeed, described, as being made partakers of the divine image, consisting in some lesser branches of sovereignty and dominion; but this is infinitely below the *Idea* of sovereignty and dominion, which is contained in the word, when applied to the great God.

'Tis true, God says to *Moses*, *See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh*^v, by which we are not to understand that any of the divine perfections were communicated to, or predicated of him; for God cannot give his glory to another: but the sense is plainly this, that he was set in God's stead: thus he is said to be instead of God to *Aaron*^z; and the same expression is used by *Elihu* to *Job*^a, *I am according to thy wish in God's stead*; so that *Moses's* being made a god to *Pharaoh*, implies nothing else but this, that he should, by being God's minister, in inflicting the plagues which he designed to bring on *Pharaoh* and his servants, be render'd formidable to them; not that he should have a right to receive divine honour from them.

Again, when the word *God* is put absolutely, without any additional character of glory, or diminution annex'd to it, it must always be understood of the great God, this being that name by which he is generally known in scripture, and never otherwise applied, without an intimation given that he is not intended

thereby: thus the Father and the Son are described in *John* i. 1. *The Word was with God, and the Word was God*, and in many other places of scripture; therefore if we can prove that our Saviour is called God in scripture, without any thing in the context tending to detract from the most known sense of the word, this will be sufficient to prove his proper deity; but we shall not only find that he is called *God* therein; but there are some additional glories annex'd to that name, whereby this will more abundantly appear.

As to the word *Lord*, though that is often applied to creatures, and is given to superiors by their subjects or servants, yet this is also sufficiently distinguished, when applied to a divine Person, from any other sense thereof, as applied to creatures. Now if we can prove that our Saviour is called *Lord* and *God* in this sense, it will sufficiently evince his proper deity; and, in order hereto, we shall consider several scriptures, wherein he is not only so called, but several characters of glory are annexed, and divine honours given to him, which are due to none but a divine Person, which abundantly determines the sense of these words, when applied to him. And,

(1.) We shall consider some scriptures in which he is called *Lord*, particularly *Psal.* cx. 1. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*; that our Saviour the Messiah, is the Person whom *David* calls his Lord, is very evident, from its being quoted and applied to him in the New Testament, in *Matt.* xxii. 44, &c. and that by calling him Lord he ascribes divine honour to him, appears from hence, that when the question was put to the Pharisees, If Christ were *David's* Lord, how could he be his Son? They might easily have replied to it, had it been taken in a lower sense; for it is not difficult to suppose that *David* might have a son descending from him, who might be advanced to the highest honours, short of what are divine; but they not understanding how two infinitely distant natures could be united in one person, so that at the same time he should be called *David's* Son, and yet his Lord, in such a sense as proves his deity, they were confounded, and put to silence.

But whether they acknowledged him to be a divine Person or no, it is evident

^r Deut. xxxii. 16.

^v Exod. vii. 1.

^f Exod. xxxiv. 17.

^z Chap. iv. 16.

^t Judges v. 8.

^a Job xxxiii. 6.

^u Jer. x. 8.

^x Psal. lxxxii. 1, 6.

Christ's being called LORD and GOD proves his Deity. 143

that *David* considers him as such; or as the Person who, pursuant to God's covenant made with him, was to sit and rule upon his throne, in whom alone it could be said that it should be perpetual, or that of his kingdom, there should be no end; and inasmuch as he says, *Ver. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, speaking of the Person whom he calls his Lord, who was to be his Son, he plainly infers, that he should exert divine power, and consequently prove himself to be a divine Person.

Again, if the word *Lord* be applied to him, as denoting his sovereignty over the church, and his being the Governor of the world, this will be considered under the next head, when we speak concerning those glorious titles and attributes that are given to him, which prove his deity; and therefore we shall wave it at present, and only consider two or three scriptures, in which he is called *Lord*, in a more glorious sense than when it is applied to any creature: thus in *Rev. xvii. 14.* speaking of the Lamb, which is a character that can be applied to none but him, and that as Mediator, he is called, *Lord of lords*, and the *Prince of the kings of the earth*, in *Rev. i. 5.* and *the Lord of glory*, in *1 Cor. ii. 8.* which will be more particularly consider'd, when we speak concerning his glorious titles, as an argument to prove it; therefore all that we shall observe at present is, that this is the same character by which God is acknowledged by those that deny our Saviour's deity to be described in *Deut. x. 17. The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords; a great God, and terrible*; so that we have as much ground to conclude when Christ is called Lord, with such additional marks of glory, of which more in its proper place, that this proves his deity, as truly as the deity of the Father is proved from this scripture.

(2.) Christ is often in scripture called God, in such a sense, in which it is never applied to a creature: thus he is called, in *Psal. xlv. 6. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; and there are many other glorious things spoken of him in that *Psalms*, which is a farther confirmation that he, who is here called God, is a divine Person, in the same sense as God the Father is; particularly he is said, *Ver. 2. To be fairer than the children of men*, that is, infinitely above them; and, *Ver. 11. speaking to the*

church, it is said, *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him*; and, in the following *Verses*, the church's compleat blessedness consists in its being brought into his palace, who is the King thereof, and so denotes him to be the spring and fountain of compleat blessedness, and *his name, or glory, is to be remember'd in all generations, and the people shall praise him for ever and ever*. This glory is ascribed to him, who is called God; and many other things are said concerning him, relating to his works, his victories, his triumphs, which are very agreeable to that character; so that it evidently appears that the Person spoken of in this *Psalms*, is truly and properly God.

I am sensible the Anti-trinitarians will object to this, that several things are spoken concerning him in this *Psalms*, that argue his inferiority to the Father; but this only proves that the Person here spoken of is consider'd as God-man, Mediator, in which respect he is, in one nature, equal; and, in the other, inferior to him; were it otherwise, one expression contain'd in this *Psalms* would be inconsistent with, and contradictory to another.

To this we shall only add, as an undeniable proof, that 'tis Christ that is here spoken of, as also that he is consider'd as Mediator, as but now observed; that the Apostle, speaking of him as Mediator, and displaying his divine glory as such, refers to these words of the Psalmist, *Heb. i. 8. Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom*.

Again, another proof of our Saviour's deity may be taken from *Matt. i. 23. Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us*. His incarnation is what gives occasion, as is plain from the words, for his being described by this name or character, *God with us*, which imports the same thing as when it is elsewhere said, *John i. 14. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*. This cannot be apply'd to any but Christ; to say the Father is call'd *Emmanuel*, is such a strain upon the sense of the text, as no impartial reader will allow of; for 'tis plain that 'tis a name given to the son upon this great occasion; and this is as glorious a display of his deity, as when God the Father says, if we suppose that text to be spoken of him elsewhere, in *Exod. xxix. 45. I will dwell*

144 CHRIST's Deity prov'd, from 1 Tim. iii. 16, &c.

dwell amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Again, Christ's deity is prov'd, in 1 Tim. iii. 16. from his being styled *God, manifest in the flesh*, implying, that the second Person in the Godhead was united to our nature; for neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost were ever said to be manifested in the flesh; and besides, he is distinguished from the Spirit, as justified by him. And he is not called *God*, because of his incarnation, as some *Sacrian* writers suppose, for to be incarnate, supposes the pre-existence of that nature, to which the human nature was united, since it is called elsewhere, assuming, or taking flesh, as it is here, being manifested therein, and consequently that he was God before this act of incarnation; and there is certainly nothing in the text which determines the word *God* to be taken in a less proper sense, any more than when it is applied to the Father.

Object. It is objected that the word *God* is not found in all the manuscripts of the *Greek* text, nor in some translations thereof, particularly the *Syriack*, *Arabick* and vulgar *Latin*, which render it, *the mystery which was manifest in the flesh*, &c.

Answer. It is not pretended to be left out in above two *Greek* copies, and it is very unreasonable to oppose these to all the rest. As for the *Syriack* and *Arabick* translations; some suppose that it is not true in fact that the word *God* is left out in the *Arabick*, and though it be left out in the *Syriack*, yet it is contained in the sense thereof, which is, great is the mystery of godliness *that he was* manifested in the flesh; and as for the vulgar *Latin* version, that has not credit enough, especially among protestants, to support it when standing in competition with so many copies of scripture in which the word is found; therefore we can by no means give up the argument which is taken from this text to prove our Saviour's deity. Besides, as a farther confirmation hereof, we might appeal to the very words of the text it self, whereby it will plainly appear, that if the word *God* be left out of it, the following part of the verse will not be so consistent with a *Mystery* as it is with *our Saviour*, particularly it is a very great impropriety of ex-

pression to say that a mystery, or as some *Sacrian* writers explain it, the will of God^b, was manifest in the flesh, and received in a glorious manner; for this is not agreeable to the sense of the *Greek* words, since it is plain that *ἐν σαρκὶ ἐφανερώθη*, which we render *was manifest in the flesh*, is justly translated, being never used in scripture to signify the preaching the gospel by weak mortal men, as they understand it: but on the other hand it is often applied to the manifestation of our Saviour in his incarnation, and is explain'd when it is said, *John* i. 14. that he was *made flesh*, and *we beheld his glory*^c; and as for the gospel, tho' it met with reception when preached to the *Gentiles*, and there were many circumstances of glory that attended this dispensation, yet it could not be said for that reason to be received up into glory. Now since what is said in this verse agrees to our Saviour, and not to the mystery of godliness, we are bound to conclude that he is *God* manifest in the flesh, and therefore that this objection is of no force.

The next scripture which we shall consider is *Acts* xx. 28. *Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*, where we observe, that he who is here spoken of is said to have a propriety in the church, this no mere creature can be said to have, but our Saviour is not only here but elsewhere describ'd as having a right to it, thus 'tis said in *Hebrews* iii. 3, 4, 6. *He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house; and he that built all things is God*, which is as though he should say, our Lord Jesus Christ hath not only built his church but all things, and therefore must be *God*, and *Ver.* 6. he is called a Son over his own house, so that he is the purchaser, the builder, and the proprietor of his church, and therefore must be a divine person; and then it is observ'd, that he that hath purchas'd this church is *God*, and that *God* hath done this with his own blood; this cannot be apply'd to any but the Mediator, the Son of *God*, whose deity it plainly proves.

Object. 1. Some object against this sense of the text, that the word *God* here is refer'd to the Father, and so the sense is, feed the church of *God*, that is of the

^b Vid. Catech. Racov. ad Quaest. LIX.

^c It is elsewhere said concerning him, 1 *John* iii. 5. that he was manifested, &c. *ἐφανερώθη*, as also in *Ver.* 8. And as for what is said in the last clause of the verse, we are considering that *he was received up into glory*, it is a very great strain on the sense of those words, to apply it to a Mystery, or to the Gospel, since the words, *ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ*, plainly intimate a person's meeting with a glorious reception when ascending into Heaven, *ἀναλαμβάνειν*, signifies *sumum recipere*, therefore we render it, received up; and so it is often applied to our Saviour, *Acts* i. 2, 11, 22. and his Ascension is called, *Luke* ix. 51. *ἡμέρα τῆς ἀναλήψεως*, the time in which he should be received up.

Father, which *He*, that is, Christ, hath purchas'd with his own blood.

Answ. To this it may be answer'd, that this seems a very great strain and force upon the grammatical sense of the words, for certainly *He* must refer to the immediate antecedent, and that is God, to wit, the Son. If such a method of expounding scripture were to be allow'd, it would be an easy matter to make the word of God speak what we please to have it; therefore we must take it in the most plain and obvious sense, as that is which we have given of this text, whereby it appears that God the Son has purchased the church with his own blood, and that he has a right to it.

Object. 2. God the Father is said to have purchased the church by the blood of Christ, which is called his blood, as he is the Proprietor of all things.

Answ. Though God be the Proprietor of all things, yet no one, that does not labour very hard to maintain the cause he is defending, would understand *his blood* in this sense. According to this method of speaking, God the Father might be said to have done every thing that the Mediator did, and so to have shed his blood upon the cross, as well as to have purchased the church thereby, as having a propriety in it.

The next scripture, which proves our Saviour's deity, is *Rom. ix. 5. Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever*; where he is not only called *God*, but *God blessed for ever*; which is a character too high for any creature, and is the very same that is given to the Father, in *2 Cor. xi. 31. who is stiled, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore*, that is, not only the Object of worship, but the Fountain of blessedness. Now if Christ be so called, as it seems evident that he is, then the word *God* is, in this text, applied to him in the highest sense, so as to argue him a divine Person. Now that this is spoken of our Saviour, is plain, because he is the subject of the proposition therein contained, and is consider'd, as being *of the fathers concerning the flesh, i. e.* with respect to his human nature; so that if we can prove that he is here called *God, blessed for ever*, we shall have the argument we contend for, this being the only thing contested by the *Anti-trinitarians*.

Object. It is objected, that the words may be otherwise render'd, namely, *Let*

God, viz. the Father, who is over all, be blessed for ever, to wit, for this great privilege, that Christ should come in the flesh; therefore it does not prove that which we bring it for.

Answ. In defence of our translation of these words, it may be replied, that it is very agreeable to the grammatical construction thereof. It is true, *Erasmus* defends the other sense of the text, and thereby gives an handle to many after him, to make use of it, as an objection against this doctrine, which, he says, may be plainly proved from many other scriptures; it is very strange, that, with one hand, he should build up, and, with the other, overthrow Christ's proper deity, unless we attribute it to that affectation which he had in his temper to appear singular, and, in many things, run counter to the common sense of mankind; or else to the favourable thoughts which he appears to have had, in some instances, of the *Arian* scheme. It may be observed, that the most ancient *Versions* render this text in the sense of our translation; as do most of the ancient Fathers in their defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, as a late writer observes^d. And it is certain, this sense given thereof by the *Anti-trinitarians*, is so apparently forced and strained, that some of the *Socinians* themselves, whose Interest it was to have taken it therein, have not thought fit to insist on it. And a learned writer^e, who has appeared in the *Anti-trinitarian* cause, seems to argue below himself, when he attempts to give a turn to this text, agreeable to his own scheme; for certainly he would have defended his sense of the text better than he does, had it been defensible; since we can receive very little conviction from his alledging, that "It is uncertain whether the word *God* was originally in the text; and if it was, whether it be not spoken of the Father." To say no more than this to it, is not to defend this sense of the text; for if there were any doubt whether the word *God* was left out of any ancient manuscripts, he would have obliged the world, had he referred to them, which, I think, no one else has done: and, since he supposes it uncertain whether it be not there spoken of the Father, that ought to have been proved, or not suggested. We might observe, in defence of our translation, that whenever the words are so used in the New Testament, that they

^d See *Whitby* in loc.

^e See *Dr. Clark's Reply to Nelson*, Pag. 86.

may be translated, *Blessed be God*^f. They are disposed in a different form, or order, and not exactly so as we read them therein: but, though this be a probable argument, we will not insist on it, but shall rather prove our translation to be just, from the connection of the words, with what goes immediately before, where the Apostle had been speaking of our Saviour, as descending from the fathers, according to the flesh, or considering him as to his human nature; therefore it is very reasonable to suppose he would speak of him as to his divine nature, especially since both these natures are spoken of together, in *John* i. 14. and elsewhere; and why they should not be intended here, cannot well be accounted for; so that if our translation be only supposed to be equally just with theirs, which, I think, none pretend to deny, the connection of the parts of the proposition laid down therein, determines the sense thereof in our favour.

Here I cannot pass over that proof which we have of our Saviour's divinity, in 1 *John* v. 20. *This is the true God, and eternal life*; where the *true God* is opposed, not only to those *Idols*, which, in the following *Verse*, he advises them to *keep themselves from*; in which sense the *Anti-trinitarians* themselves sometimes call him the true God, that is as much as to say, he is not an *Idol*; upon which occasion, a learned writer^g observes, that they deal with him as *Judas* did with our Saviour, cry, Hail Master, and then betray him: they would be thought to ascribe every thing to him but proper deity; but that this belongs to him, will evidently appear, if we can prove that these words are spoken of him. It is true, the learned author of the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity^h, takes a great deal of pains to prove that it is the Father who is here spoken of; and his exposition of the former part of the text, which does not immediately support his cause, seems very just, when he says, *The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, viz. the Father, and we are in him that is true*, speaking still of the Father, *by or through his Son Jesus Christ*; but, I humbly conceive, he does not acquit himself so well in the sense he gives of the following words, upon which the whole stress of the argument depends, not only in that he

takes it for granted, that the word *ὁ*, *This*, refers back, as is most natural and usual, not to the last word in order, but to the last and principal in sense, namely, the Father, which is, at least, doubtful, since any unprejudiced reader, who hath not a cause to maintain, which obliges him to understand it so, would refer it to the immediate antecedent, *viz.* the Son, by whom we have an interest in the Father; for when he had been speaking of him as Mediator, and, as such, as the Author of this great privilege, namely, our knowing the Father, and being in him, it seems very agreeable to describe him as a Person every way qualified for this work, and consequently as being the true God; and besides, the Apostle had spoken of the Father in the beginning of the *Verse*, as *him that is true*, or, as some manuscripts have it, *him that is the true God*, as the same author observes; therefore what reason can be assigned why this should be again repeated, and the Apostle supposed to say we know the Father, who is the true God; and he is the true God, which certainly doth not run so smooth, to say the best of it, as when we apply it to our Saviour: that author, indeed, attempts to remove the impropriety of the expression, by giving an uncommon sense of these words, namely, *This knowledge of God is the true religion, and the way to eternal life*; or, *this is the true worship of God by his Son unto eternal life*, which, though it be a truth, yet can hardly be supposed to comport with the grammatical sense of the words; for why should *the true God* be taken in a proper sense in one part of the *Verse*, and a figurative in the other? And if we take this liberty of supposing *Ellipses* in texts, and supplying them with words that make to our own purpose, it would be no difficult matter to prove almost any doctrine from scripture; therefore the plain sense of the text is, that our Saviour is the true God intended in these words; and it is as evident a proof of his deity, as when the Father is called, *the true God*; or *the only true God*, as he is in *John* xvii. 3. where, though he be so called, nevertheless he is not to be consider'd as the only Person who is God, in the most proper sense, but as having the one divine nature; in which sense the word *God* is always taken, when God is said to be one.

^f Thus they are four times, *Luke* i. 68. 2 *Cor.* i. 3. *Eph.* i. 3. and 1 *Pet.* i. 3. wherein *ἐυλογῶντες* is put before *Θεῷ*.
^g Dr. Owen against Biddle, Pag. 256.

^h See Dr. Clark's Reply to Nelson, Pag. 97.

CHRIST'S Deity prov'd from *Isai. ix. 6. and Tit. ii. 13.* 147

Moreover, let it be observed, that he who is here called the true God, is stiled, *life eternal*, which, I humbly conceive, the Father never is, though he be said to *give us eternal life*, in one of the foregoing *Verses*; whereas it is not only said concerning our Saviour, that *in him was life*, *John i. 4.* but he says, *John xiv. 6. I am the life*; and 'tis said in *1 John i. 2. The life was manifested, and we have seen it, or him, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father*, *περὶ τὸν πατέρα*, which is an explication of his own words, *John i. 1. περὶ τὸν Θεόν, with God*; and then he explains what he had said in *Ver. 14.* of the same *Chapter*, when he says, *the word of Life*, or the Person who calls himself *the life* was *manifested unto us*; which seems to be a peculiar phrase, used by this Apostle, whereby he sets forth our Saviour's glory under this character, whom he calls *Life*, or *eternal life*; and he that is so, is the same Person, who is called the true God; which character of being *true*, is often used and applied to Christ, by the same inspired writer, more than by any other, as appears from several scriptures, *Rev. iii. 7, 14.* and *Chap. xix. 11.* and though, indeed, it refers to him, as Mediator, as does also his being called *Eternal life*, yet this agrees very well with his proper deity, which we cannot but think to be plainly evinced by this text.

There is another scripture, which not only speaks of Christ as God, but with some other divine characters of glory added to this name, which prove his proper deity: thus in *Isai. ix. 6.* he is stiled, *the mighty God*, and several other glorious titles are given to him; as, *the wonderful Counsellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*; these are all applied to him, as one whose incarnation was foretold, *to us a Child is born*, &c. And he is farther described as a Person who was to be the Governor of his church, as it is said, *the government shall be upon his shoulder*; all which expressions so exactly

agree with his character as God-man, Mediator, that they contain an evident proof of his proper deity.

Object. They who deny our Saviour's deity, object, that the words ought to be otherwise translated, *viz. the wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, shall call him, the Prince of peace.*

Ans. We have before observed, in defence of our translation of another textⁱ, that the *Hebrew* word, that we translate, *he shall be called*, (which is the same with that which is used in this text) does not fully appear to signify actively; and also that such transpositions, as are, both there and here, made use of, are not agreeable to that language; and therefore our sense of the text is so plain and natural, that any one, who reads it impartially, without forcing it to speak what they would have it, would take it in the sense in which we translate it, which contains a very evident proof of our Saviour's divinity.

There is another scripture which speaks of Christ, not only as God, but as the *great God*, in *Tit. ii. 13.* *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; none ever denied that he, who is said *to appear*, is true and proper God, and therefore the principal thing we have to prove is, that the text refers only to our Saviour, or that the Apostle does not speak therein of two Persons, to wit, the Father and the Son, but of the Son; and accordingly, tho' we oftentimes take occasion to vindicate our translation, here we cannot but think it ought to be corrected; and that the word *And* should be render'd *Even*^k: But, because I would not lay too great stress on a grammatical criticism, how probable soever it may be; we may consider some other things in the text, whereby it appears that our Saviour is the only Person spoken of therein, from what is said of him, agreeable to his character as Mediator: thus the Apo-

ⁱ See Pag. 140.

^k It is certain, that *καὶ* is oftentimes exegetical, as well as copulative; and it appears to be so, by a great many instances in the New Testament; when it is put between two nouns, the first whereof has an article, and the other none: thus it will be acknowledged by all, that it is taken, in *2 Cor. i. 3. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, *ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ*; so in *Eph. i. 3. 2 Thess. ii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 3. Rom. xv. 6. Phil. iv. 20. 2 Cor. xi. 31.* and in *Coloss. ii. 2.* In these scriptures, and others of the like nature, the *Arians* themselves allow that this rule holds good, though they will not allow it, when it proves our Saviour's deity, because it militates against their own scheme; as in *Eph. v. 5.* where the Apostle speaks of the *kingdom of Christ, and of God*, as we render it; but, I think, it ought to be render'd, *even of God*; for it is, *τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ Θεῷ*; so in *2 Thess. i. 12. The grace of our God, and, or even, of the Lord Jesus Christ*, the words are, *τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ*. See among many other scriptures to the like purpose, *1 Tim. v. 21. and Chap. vi. 13. 2 Pet. i. 2.* 'Tis true, there are several exceptions to this rule, though they are generally in such instances, in which it is impossible for the latter word to contain an explication of the former, though, in other instances, it, for the most part, holds good; and therefore it will, at least, amount to a probable argument, that the words in this text, *τῷ μεγάλῳ Θεῷ καὶ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ*, ought to be render'd, *of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

He here speaks of his appearing; as he also does elsewhere, in *Heb. ix. 28.* *He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation;* and in *1 John iii. 2.* *When he shall appear, we shall be like him, &c.* and then he who, in this text, is said to appear, is called the *blessed Hope*, that is, the object of his people's expectation, who shall be blessed by him when he appears: thus he is called, in *1 Tim. i. 1.* *our Hope*, and in *Coloss. i. 27.* *The Hope of glory*; now we don't find that the Father is described in scripture as appearing, or as the hope of his people. 'Tis true, a late writer¹ gives that turn to the text, and supposes, that as the Father is said to judge the world by Jesus Christ, and as when the Son shall come at last, it will be in the glory of his Father; so, in that sense, the Father may be said to appear by him, as the brightness of his glory shines forth in his appearance; but since this is no where applied to the sense of those other scriptures, which speak of every eye's seeing him in his human nature, and plainly refer to some glories that shall be put upon that nature, which shall be the object of sense; why should we say that the text imports nothing else but that the Father shall appear in his appearing, which is such a strain upon the sense of the words, that they who make use of it would not allow of, in other cases? I might have added, as a farther confirmation of the sense we have given of this text, its agreeableness with what the Apostle says, in *Tit. ii. 10.* when he calls the gospel, *The doctrine of God our Saviour*, and with what immediately follows in *Ver. 14.* where, having before described him as our Saviour, he proceeds to shew wherein he was so, namely, *by giving himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*; and he is not only called *God our Saviour* by this Apostle, but he is so called in *2 Pet. i. 1.* where the church is said to have obtained *like precious faith, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*; or, as the marginal reading has it, *of our God and Saviour*; this seems to be so just a reading of the text we are considering, that some, on the other side of the question, allow that the words will very well bear it; but they think their sense agreeable, as the author but now mentioned says, to the whole tenor of scripture, which is little other than a boast, as though the scripture favoured their scheme of doctrine, which, whether it does or no,

they, who consider the arguments on both sides, may judge; and, we think, we have as much reason to conclude that our sense of the words, which establishes the doctrine of our Saviour's being the great God, is agreeable to the whole tenor of scripture; but, passing that over, we proceed to another argument.

There is one scripture in which our Saviour is called both *Lord and God*, viz. *John xx. 28.* *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.* The manner of address to our Saviour, in these words, implies an act of adoration, given to him by this disciple, upon his having received a conviction of his resurrection from the dead; and there is nothing in the text, but what imports his right to the same glory which belongs to the Father, when He is called his people's God. Herein they lay claim to him, as their covenant God; their chief good and happiness; thus *David* expresses himself, *Psal. xxxi. 14.* *I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said thou art my God*; and God promises, in *Hos. ii. 23.* that *he would say to them which were not his people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God*; and *Chap. viii. 2.* *Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee*; and the Apostle *Paul*, speaking of the Father, says, *Phil. iv. 19.* *My God shall supply all your need, &c.* that is, the God from whom I have all supplies of grace; the God whom I worship, to whom I owe all I have, or hope for, who is the Fountain of blessedness. Now if there be nothing in this text we are considering, that determines the words to be taken in a lower sense than this, as there does not appear to be, then we are bound to conclude, that Christ's deity is fully proved from it.

Object. Some of the *Socinians* suppose, that the words, *my Lord*, and *my God*, contain a form of exclamation, or admiration; and that *Thomas* was surprized when he was convinced that our Saviour was risen from the dead, and so cries out, as one in a rapture, *O my Lord! O my God!* intending hereby the Father, to whose power alone this event was owing.

Answer. Such exclamations as these, though often used in common conversation, and sometimes without that due regard to the divine Majesty, that ought to attend them, are not agreeable to the scripture way of speaking. But, if any scriptures might be produced to justify it, it is sufficiently evident, that no such

¹ See Dr. Clark's Reply to Nelson, Pag. 85.

thing is intended in these words, not only because the grammatical construction will not admit of it^m, but because the words are brought in as a reply to what Christ had spoken to him in the foregoing Verse; Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, &c. whereas it is very absurd to suppose, that an exclamation contains the form of a reply, therefore it must be taken for an explicit acknowledgment of him, as *his Lord*, and *his God*; so that this objection represents the words so contrary to the known acceptation thereof, that many of the Socinians themselves, and other late writers, who oppose our Saviour's proper deity, do not think fit to insist on it, but have recourse to some other methods, to account for those difficulties, that lie in their way, taken from this, and other texts, where Christ is plainly called God, as in *John* i. 1. and many other places in the New Testament.

Here we may take occasion to consider the method which the *Anti-trinitarians* use to account for the sense of those scriptures, in which Christ is called God. And,

1. Some have recourse to a critical remark, which they make on the word Θεός, God, namely, that when it has the article ὁ before it, it adds an emphasis to the sense thereof, and determines it to be applied to the Father. And inasmuch as the word is sometimes applied to him, when there is no article, (which, to some, would appear an objection, sufficient to invalidate this remark) they add, that it is always to be applied to him, if there be nothing in the text that determines it otherwise. This remark was first made by *Origen*, and afterwards largely insisted on by *Eusebius*, as *Dr. Clark* observesⁿ; and he so far gives into it, as that, he apprehends, 'tis never applied, when put absolutely in scripture, to any other Person; we shall therefore enquire into the justice thereof.

By the word God absolutely taken, (whether Θεός have an article before it or no) we understand nothing else but its being used without any thing to determine its application, either to the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost; whereas, on the other hand, when it is not absolutely used, there are several things, by which we may certainly know to which of the divine Persons it belongs: thus it

is particularly applied to the Father, when there is something in the text that distinguishes him from the Son or Spirit; so *John* xiv. 1. *Ye believe in God, viz. the Father, believe also in me*; and in all those scriptures, in which Christ is called the Son of God, there the word God is determined to be applied to the Father; and when God is said to act in relation to Christ as Mediator, as in *Heb.* ii. 13. *Behold, I and the children which God hath given me*, it is so applied.

And the word God is determined to be applied to the Son, when he is particularly mentioned, and so called, or described, by any of his mediatorial works or characters; as in *Matt.* i. 23. *God, viz. the Son, with us*; and *1 Tim.* iii. 16. *God manifest in the flesh*; or when there is any thing in the context, which discovers that the word God is to be applied to him.

Also, with respect to the Holy Ghost, when any of his personal works, or characters, are mentioned in the text or context, and the word God applied to him, to whom they are ascribed, that determines it to belong to the Holy Ghost; as in *Acts* v. 3, 4. speaking concerning lying to the Holy Ghost, 'tis explain'd, *Thou hast not lyed unto men, but unto God*; and *1 Cor.* iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*; but more of this when we speak of the deity of the Holy Ghost. In these, and such-like cases, the word God is not put absolutely: But, on the other hand, 'tis put absolutely when there is nothing of this nature to determine its application; as in those scriptures that speak of the divine Unity, viz. in *Matt.* xix. 17. *There is none good but one, that is God*; and in *1 Cor.* viii. 4. *There is none other God but one*; and in *James* ii. 19. *Thou believest that there is one God, &c.* and *John* x. 33. *Thou, being a man, makest thyself God*; and in many other places of the like nature, in which there is an Idea contained of the divine perfections; but it is not particularly determined which of the Persons in the Godhead is intended thereby.

This is what we are to understand by the word Θεός, God, being put absolutely without any regard to its having an article before it, or not; from whence nothing certain can be determined concerning the particular application thereof,

^m The words, ὁ Κύριος and ὁ Θεός, are in the nominative case, which denotes that they are not spoken in a way of exclamation.

ⁿ See Reply to Nelson, Pag. 67.

150 *The Meaning of the Word GOD when used absolutely.*

since many scriptures might easily be refer'd to, in which it is put without an article, though applied to the Father; and, on the other hand, it has very often an article put before it when applied to the Son, and sometimes when applied to idols, or false gods^o; and the devil is called, ὁ Θεὸς τῆ αἰῶνος τῆς, *the God of this world*; and it may be observ'd, that in two *Evangelists*^p, referring to the same thing, and using the same words, one has the word with an article, and the other without.

Therefore, setting aside this critical remark about the application of the word *God*, when there is an article before Θεός, the main thing in controversy is how we are to apply it, when neither the context, nor any of the rules above-mentioned, give us any direction therein, namely, whether it is in that case only to be applied to the Father, or indifferently to any of the Persons in the Godhead. The author above-mentioned, in his scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, always applies it to the Father; and it may easily be perceived, that he has no other reason than this to apply many scriptures to the Father, which others, who have defended the doctrine of the Trinity in another way, apply to the Son, as being directed herein by something spoken of him in the context, as in *Rev.* xix. 4, 5, 6, 17^q.

And this is, indeed, the method used by all the *Anti-trinitarians*, in applying the word *God*, especially when found absolutely in scripture. That which principally induces them hereunto, is, because they take it for granted, that as there is but one divine Being, so there is but one Person who is truly and properly divine^r, and that is the Father, to whom they take it for granted that the word *God* is to be applied, when not determined in scripture to signify any finite being, as the Son, or any creature below him. But this supposition is not sufficiently proved, *viz.* that the one divine Being is a Person, and that this is only the Father, whom they often call the supream, or most high God, that is, superior, when compared with the Son and Spirit, as well as all creatures; but this we cannot allow of, and therefore

can't see sufficient reason to conclude, that the word *God*, when put absolutely, is to be applied to no other than the Father.

That which I would humbly offer, as the sense of the word, when thus found in scripture, is, that when the Holy Ghost has left it undetermined, 'tis our safest way to consider it as such, and so to apply it indifferently to the Father, Son, or Spirit, and not to one Person, exclusive of the others: thus when 'tis said, *Mark* xii. 29, 32. *The Lord our God is one Lord*; and *there is one God*, and *there is none other but him*; the meaning is, that there is but one divine Being, which is called God, as opposed to the creature, or to all who are not God by nature: thus when the unity of the Godhead is asserted in that scripture here referred to, *Deut.* vi. 4. and *Israel* was exhorted to *serve him*, they are, at the same time, forbidden to *go after other gods*, *Ver.* 13, 14. And when 'tis said, that to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, is more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, *Mark* xii. 33. it implies, that religious worship was perform'd to God; but 'tis certain that this was performed to all the Persons in the Godhead; therefore none of them are excluded in this scripture, in which the unity of God is asserted. And, however, Dr. *Clark* concludes *Athanasius*, from his unguarded way of speaking, in some other instances, to be of his side; yet, in that very place which he refers to^t, he expressly says, that when the scripture saith the Father is the only God, and that *there is one God*, and *I am the First and the Last*; yet this does not destroy the divinity of the Son, for he is that one God, and first and only God, &c. And the same thing may be said of the Holy Ghost.

Again, when it is said, *Matt.* xix. 17. *There is none good but one, that is God*; it implies, that the divine nature, which is predicated of all the Persons in the Godhead, hath those perfections that are essential to it, and particularly that goodness by which God is denominated all-sufficient: so in *Acts* xv. 18. when it is said, *Known unto God are all his works*; where the word *God* is absolute, and not, in a determinate sense, applied either to Father, Son, or Spirit, the meaning is,

^o *Acts* vii. 43. *Chap.* xiv. 11.

doctrine, &c. *Pag.* 67, 68. and in many other places.

^p This is the sense of Dr. *Clark's* first Section in Part. II. on which his whole scheme seems to be founded; and he speaks to the same purpose in several other places; and, in particular, in his Reply to *Nelson*, *Pag.* 67, 68. he concludes the word Θεός, *God*, absolutely taken to import the same, as ὁ παντοκράτωρ or ὁ ἐν παντί Θεός, by which he always intends the Father.

^q See Scripture-doctrine, *Pag.* 3.

^r See *Matt.* xix. 26. compared with *Mark* x. 27.

^s See Scripture-

that all the Persons in the Godhead created all things, which they are expressly said to do in several scriptures, and, as the consequence thereof, that they have a right to all things, which are known unto them.

Object. It will probably be objected to this, that we assert that there are four divine Persons, namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the Godhead, which is common to them all, since we call it *God*, which word, in other instances, connotes a personal character; and, if so, then it will follow, that we are chargeable with a contradiction in terms, when we say that there are three Persons in the Godhead, *viz.* in one Person.

Answer. To this it may be replied, that though the divine nature, which is common to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is represented, in scripture, as though it were a Person, when it is called *God*, yet 'tis to be taken only in a metaphorical sense; whereas the Father, Son, and Spirit, as has been before consider'd, are called divine Persons properly, or without a metaphor. Moreover, the divine nature, though it be called *God*, is never consider'd as co-ordinate with, or as distinguished from the divine Persons, as though it were a Person in the same sense as they are; and therefore, whenever it is so called, it must be consider'd as opposed to the creature, as we before observed, the one *God* is opposed to those who are not *God* by nature. It may also be consider'd, that those divine perfections, which are implied in the word *God*, taken in this sense, are known by the light of nature; (whereas the divine personality, as applied either to the Father, Son, or Spirit, is a matter of pure revelation) and it is such an *Idea* of *God*, or the *Godhead*, that is intended thereby. So that all the force of this objection consists only in the sense of a word; and the principal thing in debate is, whether the word *God*, thus absolutely and indeterminately consider'd, is a proper mode of speaking, to set forth the divine nature? but if the scripture uses the word in this sense, it is not for us to enquire about the propriety, or impropriety, thereof; but we must take heed that we do not pervert, or misunderstand, the sense hereof, which they do, who either speak, on the one hand, of the *Godhead*, when called *God*, as though it were distinct from the Father, Son, and Spirit; or, on the other hand, understand it only of the Father, as op-

posed to the Son and Spirit, as the *Anti-trinitarians* do, who deny their proper deity, and when they assert that there is but one *God*, do, in effect, maintain that there is but one Person in the *Godhead*. Thus concerning the sense in which the *Anti-trinitarians* take the word *God*, when (as 'tis generally express'd) it is taken absolutely in scripture, as applying it only to the Father; we proceed to consider,

2. That they farther suppose that our Saviour is called *God*, in the New Testament, by a divine warrant, as a peculiar honour put upon him; and here, they think, it not difficult to prove, that a creature may have a right conferred on him to receive divine honour; which, if they were able to do, it would tend more to weaken our cause, and establish their own, than any thing they have hitherto advanced. But this we shall have occasion to militate against under the *fourth* head of argument, to prove the deity of the Son, *viz.* his having a right to divine worship, and therefore shall pass it over at present, and consider them as intending nothing more by the word *God*, when applied to our Saviour, but what imports an honour infinitely below that which belongs to the Father; and this they suppose to have been confer'd upon him, on some occasions, relating to the work for which he came into the world. The *Socinians*, in particular, speak of his being called *God*, or the *Son of God*.

(1.) Because of his having been *sanctified*, and *sent into the world*, John x. 36. *viz.* to redeem it, in that peculiar and low sense in which they understand the word *Redemption*, of which more hereafter.

(2.) Also from his extraordinary conception and birth, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as it is said, in *Luke* i. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*

(3.) Another reason of his having this honour conferred upon him, they take from his resurrection, and so refer to *Rom.* i. 4. in which it is said, that he was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.*

(4.) Another reason hereof they take from his ascension into heaven, or being glorified, at which time they suppose

that he was made an High Priest, and had, in an eminent degree, the name and character of God put upon him, for which they refer to *Heb. v. 5.* in which it is said, *Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

But they plainly pervert the sense of these respective texts but now mentioned, inasmuch as they suppose that his mission, incarnation, resurrection, and ascension, are the principal reasons of his being called God; and that this deity is founded not in the excellency of his nature, but in these relative circumstances, in which, as an act of grace, this honour was conferred upon him, which God, had he pleased, might have conferred on any other creature, capable of yielding obedience to him, or receiving such a commission from him; whereas, in reality, these scriptures refer to that glory which he had as Mediator, as a demonstration of his deity, and these honours were agreeable to his character, as a divine Person, but did not constitute him God, as they suppose.

But these things are not so particularly insisted on by some late *Anti-trinitarians*, though they all agree in this, that his right to divine honour is the result of that authority which he has received from God, to perform the works which are ascribed to him, relating to the good of mankind; whereas we cannot but conclude, from the scriptures before brought to prove his proper deity, in which he is called *Lord* and *God*, in as strong a sense, as when those words are applied to the Father, that he is therefore God equal with the Father.

Thus having consider'd our Saviour's proper deity, as evinced from his being called *Lord* and *God*; and also, that these names are given to him in such a sense, as that hereby the Godhead is intended, as much as when it is applied to the Father; we shall close this head, by considering two scriptures, in which the divine nature is ascribed to him; and the first of them is in *Coloss. ii. 9.* *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; in which we may observe, that 'tis not barely said, that God dwelleth in him, which would not so evidently have proved his deity, because God is elsewhere said to dwell in others: thus, in *1 John iv. 12.* 'tis said, *God dwelleth in us*; but here it is said, the Godhead dwelleth in him, which is never applied

to any creature; and the expression is very emphatical, the fulness, yea, all the fulness of the Godhead, dwelleth in him; what can we understand thereby, but that all the perfections of the divine nature belong to him? The Apostle had been speaking, in *Ver. 2.* of the *mystery of Christ*, as what the church was to know, and acknowledge, as well as that of the Father; and he also considers him as the Fountain of wisdom, *Ver. 3.* *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*; and what is here spoken concerning him, very well corresponds therewith, as being expressive of his divine glory; the fulness of the Godhead is said, indeed, to dwell in him *bodily*, by which we are to understand his human nature, as the body is, in some other scriptures, taken for the man: thus, in *Rom. xii. 1.* we are exhorted *to present our bodies, i. e. our selves, a living sacrifice to God*; so here the divine nature, as subsisting in him, is said to dwell in, that is, to have the human nature united to it, which is meant by its dwelling in him *bodily*.

The account which some give of the sense of this text, to evade the force of the argument, taken from thence, to prove our Saviour's deity, does little more than shew how hard the *Anti-trinitarians* are put to it to maintain their ground, when they say that the word *Θεός*, which we render *Godhead*, signifies some extraordinary gifts confer'd upon him, especially such as tended to qualify him to discover the mind and will of God; or, at least, that nothing else is intended thereby, but that authority which he had from God, to perform the work which he came into the world about; since it is certain, that this falls infinitely short of what is intended by the word *Godhead*, which must signify the divine nature, subsisting in him, who assumed, or was made flesh, and so dwelt therein, as in a temple.

There is another scripture, which seems to attribute to him the divine nature, *viz. Phil. ii. 6.* where it is said, that he was *in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God*; by the *form of God*, I humbly conceive, we are to understand the divine nature which he had, and therefore it was no instance of robbery in him to assert, that he was equal with God. If this sense of the text can be defended, it will evidently prove his proper deity, since it is never said, concerning any creature, that he is in the form of God, or, as the words may be render'd,

render'd, that he subsisted in the form of God; now it is well known, that the word which we render *form*, is not only used by the schoolmen, but by others, before their time, to signify the nature, or essential properties, of that to which it is applied; so that this sense thereof was well known in the Apostle's days. Therefore, why may we not suppose, that the Holy Ghost, in scripture, may once, at least, use a word which would be so understood by them? and it will farther appear, that Christ's deity is signified thereby, if the following words are to be understood in the sense contain'd in our translation, that *he thought it not robbery to be equal with God*; now this seems very plain, for the same word, *ἡγήσατο*, *he thought*, is taken in the same sense in the third Verse of this Chapter; *Let every man esteem, or think, others better than themselves*; and it is used about twenty times in the New Testament, five times in this epistle, besides in this text, and never understood otherwise than as signifying *to think, esteem, or account*; and it would destroy the sense of the respective texts, where it is used to take it otherwise. This the *Anti-trinitarians* themselves will not deny, inasmuch as it does not affect their cause; notwithstanding they determine that it must be otherwise translated in this text; and so they render the words, *ἐχ' ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ*, *he did not covet to be honour'd, or was not greedy, or in haste of being honour'd as God*; that is, he did not affect to appear like a divine Person, or catch at those divine honours that did not belong to him. Could this sense of the text be made out to be just, it would effectually overthrow our argument, taken from thence, to prove Christ's proper deity: but this is as foreign from the sense of the words, as any sense that could be put upon them; and all that is pretended to justify it, is

a reference which they make to a phrase, or two, used in a *Greek* writer, which is not at all to their purpose *. Moreover, the sense of this text, as agreeable to the words of our translation, will farther appear to be just, if we consider, that our Saviour's *being in the form of God*, is there opposed to his having afterwards been *in the form of a Servant*, or the *fashion of a Man*; now if the latter be to be understood of his being truly and properly Man, and not to be taken barely for something in him which resembled the human nature; or if his *taking on him the form of a Servant*, imports, his being in a capacity to perform that obedience which was due from him, as man to God, in a proper, and not a theatrical sense, then it will follow, that his being in the form of God, as opposed hereunto, must be taken for his being truly and properly God, or for his having the divine nature, as before mentioned, which was the thing to be proved.

I might here consider the sense which Dr. *Whitby*, in his *Annotations*, gives of our Saviour's being *in the form of God*, as opposed to that of a servant, (after he had given up the sense of the words, as in our translation, to the adversary) which is, that his being in the form of God, implies, his appearing, before his incarnation, in a bright shining cloud, or light, or in a flame of fire, or with the attendance of an host of Angels, as he is sometimes said to have done, which the *Jews* call *Shechinah*, or the divine Majesty, as being a visible emblem of his presence; this he calls *the form of God*, and his not appearing so, when incarnate in this lower world, *the form of a Servant*, as opposed to it; and adds, that when he ascended into heaven, he reassumed the form of God; and therefore whenever he has occasionally appear'd, as to the martyr *Stephen* at his death, or to

* See Dr. *Clark's* Scripture-doctrine, Pag. 176.

x *Whitby* is very particular in laying down this sense of the text, with the defence thereof, in his annotations on this scripture, from *Heliodorus*, where he finds the words, *ἀρπαγμα ποιῆν*, which he renders, *to snatch at*; and *ἀρπαγμα ἡγείσθαι*, which, he supposes, signifies to pursue, or covet, a thing that is desirable; but, however, the words going before, or following, in that author, may determine that to be his sense thereof, as the sense of particular words is oftentimes greatly varied thereby; yet this will not justify the rendering them in the same sense, in other instances, very foreign thereunto, as certainly the text we are explaining must be reckon'd to be; besides, the word is not the same, for 'tis *ἀρπαγμα*, which properly signifies a prey, or the thing stolen; and therefore though *ἀρπαγμα ποιῆν ἐπιθυμίαν* may signify, *to catch at an opportunity*, as a person catches at what he thinks for his advantage; yet if the word *ἀρπαγμὸν* had been used instead of it, it would very much have alter'd the sense thereof; also though *ἀρπαγμα ἡγείσθαι* signifies, *to esteem a thing worthy to be pursued, or catch'd at, as a prey*, yet *ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγείσθαι*, which are the words in the text we are considering, signify no such thing, but rather *to reckon a thing unlawful to be pursued, as what he has no right to*; and that is the sense thereof in our text, *q. d.* He did not think it unlawful to pursue, or lay claim to that divine honour, of being equal with God, or, as we render it, *thought it no robbery*, &c. For the justifying of this sense, every one, that observes the acceptation of the *Greek* words, will find that *ἀρπαγμὸς* signifies, *the action of robbing*, and *ἀρπαγμα* the thing stolen, as may be observed in many other words, where the former construction signifies the act; the latter, the effect: as in *λογισμὸς* and *λόγισμα*, *κομπασμὸς* and *κόμπασμα*, *κολασμὸς* and *κόλασμα*, *δουλομὸς* and *δουλομα*, *ὀπλισμὸς* and *ὀπλισμα*, *ἐσχασμὸς* and *ἐσχασμα*; and, in the New Testament, *βαπτισμὸς* signifies the action of baptizing, and *βάπτισμα* the ordinance in which it is perform'd. See *Mark* vii. 8. compared with *Matth.* iii. 7. and *Chap.* xxi. 25. Multitudes of instances might have been given, but these are sufficient.

the Apostle *Paul* at his first conversion, it has been in that form, or with like emblems of majesty and divinity, as before his incarnation.

Here I would observe concerning this, that what he says of Christ's appearing with emblems of majesty and glory before his incarnation, and the glory that was put upon his human nature after his ascension into heaven, is a great truth; but as this is never stiled, in scripture, the form of God, nor was the symbol of the divine glory ever called therein the divine majesty, however it might be called by *Jewish* writers; therefore this has no reference to the sense of this text, nor does it, in the least, enervate the force of the argument, taken from it, to prove our Saviour's proper deity, any more than his critical remark on the words thereof does, the sense of our translation, whereby it evidently appears.

I might also observe the sense which another learned^y writer gives of *the form of God* in this text, which is the same that is given by several of the *Socinians*; namely, that it has a relation to his working miracles while here upon earth, which is certainly very disagreeable to the scope and design of the text, since he is said to be *in the form of God*, before he took upon him the form of a Servant, that is, before his incarnation: and besides, the working miracles, never was deem'd sufficient to denominate a Person to be in the form of God, for if it had, many others, both before and after him, might have had this applied to them; whereas it is a glory appropriate to him, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

I would not wholly pass over that which some call a controverted text of scripture, in 1 John v. 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one*, lest it should be thought that I conclude the arguments, brought by the *Anti-trinitarians*, sufficiently conclusive to prove it spurious: but I shall say the less on this subject, because it is a very hard matter to advance any thing that has not been very largely insisted on, by various writers; among whom I cannot but mention, with great esteem; one who has de-

fended the scripture-doctrine of the Trinity with a great deal of learning and judgment, who has given a particular account of several that have written on either side of the question^z. No one pretends to deny, that this text is not to be found in a great number of manuscripts, among which some are generally allowed to be of great antiquity; therefore it is the less to be wonder'd at, that it is left out in some ancient *Versions* thereof, which were taken from copies that were destitute of it; all which only proves, that the text has been corrupted: but the main question is, which of those copies are to be reckon'd genuine, those which have it, or others which have it not? It must be allow'd, that there are a considerable number, in which the text is inserted, as *Beza* and others observe; and it will be a hard matter to prove that these are all spurious, which must be done, before we shall be obliged to expunge it out of scripture.

If it be objected, that the manuscripts, which have the text, are not so ancient as those that are without it, it will be a difficult matter for them to determine the antiquity thereof, with such exactness, as, by comparing one with the other, it may be certainly known, with respect to all of them, which has the preference, and by what a number of years: besides, since it is certain, that more manuscripts of scripture are lost by far, than are now known to be in the world; unless we suppose that religion, in ancient times, was contracted into a very narrow compass, or that very few, in the first ages of the church, had copies of scripture by them, which is not to be supposed; and, if so, then it will be hard to prove that those manuscripts, which have the text inserted, did not take it from some others, that were in being before them; so that the genuineness, or spuriousness of the text, is not to be determined only or principally by inspection into ancient manuscripts.

Nor can I think it very material to offer conjectures concerning the manner how the text came first to be corrupted. Dr. *Hammond*, and others, suppose, that some one, who transcribed this epistle, might commit a blunder, in leaving out this text, because of the repetition of the

^y Grotius in loc.

^z Mr. *Abraham Taylor*, in his true scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, Part I. Chap. 2. in which we have his own method of reasoning in defence thereof, which is, at least, sufficient to remove the boasts and insults of those who wonder that we should not give up the cause entirely to them.

words in the following *Verse*, *There are three that bear record*. It is, indeed, a hard thing to trace every mistake made by an amanuensis to its first original; however, this must be concluded, that it is possible for it to be left out through inadvertency, but it could not be put in without a notorious fraud; and no one would attempt to do this, unless some end, which he thought valuable, were answered thereby. Indeed, if the doctrine of the Trinity could not have been maintained without such an insertion, I will not say, that every one, who ever defended it, had honesty enough to abhor such a vile practice; but this I am bound to say, that if any one did so, he was guilty not only of fraud, but folly, at the same time; since the divinity of the Son and Spirit, as well as of the Father, is maintained throughout the whole scripture; and the principal thing asserted concerning the Son, in this text, viz. that he is *One* with the Father, is expressly laid down in his own words, *John x. 30. I and my Father are one*.

I know the *Arians* take occasion to censure the defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity, as being guilty of this fraud, though Father *Simon*^a is a little more sparing of his reflexions on them; but he is no less injurious to the truth, when he maintains, that some person or other, in the margin of a copy, which he had by him, which he supposes to have been about five hundred years old, had affixed to *Ver. 8.* these words, as an explication thereof, as tho' the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were intended thereby, to wit, by the *Spirit, water, and blood*; and from hence concludes, that the next person, who transcribed from this manuscript, mistook this note for a part of the text; and so the 7th *Verse* came to be inserted. This *Le Clerc* calls a setting the matter in a clear light; for some persons are ready to believe that which supports their own cause, how weakly soever it be maintain'd.

It might easily be replied to this, that this text was known in the world long enough before that manuscript was wrote, and consequently this insertion could not first take its rise from thence; and therefore to produce a single instance of this nature, is, I humbly conceive, nothing to the purpose^b.

But, passing by what respects scripture-

manuscripts, there is more stress to be laid on the writings of those who have refer'd to this text; and accordingly it is certain, that it was often quoted in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, by ancient writers, in the fifth and following centuries, therefore it was found in the manuscripts that they used. 'Tis true, it is not quoted by the Fathers, who wrote in the fourth century, to wit, *Athanasius, Cyril, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom*, nor by *Augustin*, and some others; but nothing can be infer'd from hence, but that it was not in the copies they made use of: but it does not follow that it was in no copy at that time; for, if we look farther back to the third century, we find it expressly refer'd to by *Cyprian*, which I cannot but lay a very great stress on; he has it in two places, in the former of which he occasionally mentions these words, *These three are one*; and, in the latter, he expressly quotes this scripture; and says, it is *written of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that these three are one*; which evidently proves, that he found it in some manuscript extant in his time, which was before any manuscript, now in being, is pretended to have been written; for even the *Alexandrian* manuscript is, I think, supposed by none to be of greater antiquity than the fourth century, which seems to me to be of greater force than any thing that is suggested, concerning its being not found in manuscripts of later date; and we may observe, that that Father does not speak of it as a certain manuscript, which was reserved, as a treasure, in some private library, which might be adulterated; nor doth he pretend to prove the authority thereof, nor make use of it, to prove the genuineness of the text; but quotes the text, as we do any other place of scripture, as supposing it was generally acknowledged to be contained therein; and he also was reckon'd a man of the greatest integrity, as well as piety, and so would not refer to any text, as a part of the sacred writings, which was not so.

Object. It is objected against this, by the *Anti-trinitarians*, that though he quotes scripture, yet it is not this, but *Ver. 8.* and that not in the words thereof, but in a mystical sense, which he puts upon it, by the *Spirit, water, and blood*, agreeing in one, intending the Father,

Son,

^a See *Histoire Crit. du Nouv. Testam. Chap. 18. Pag. 204.*

^b See this conjecture of Father *Simon* learnedly opposed in *Smith's Miscellan. contra Simon.*

^c Vid. *Epist. LXXIII. ad Iubaianum. & de Unitate Eccl. c. V.*

156 CHRIST asserts his Deity in Conference with the Jews.

Son, and Spirit, being one: and this is the sense *Facundus*, an *African* bishop, who lived about the middle of the sixth century, puts upon it, and supposes him thus to quote it.

Answ. But to this it may be answer'd, that his judgment is no more to be valued, who lived three hundred years after him, than if he had lived in this present age; nor had he any farther light to understand *Cyprian's* meaning, than we have; and we know very well, that *Cyprian* was not so unreasonably fond of mystical interpretations of scripture, as *Origen*, and some others of the Fathers were; and even they never presumed to quote any mystical sense, which they put on scripture, as the words thereof, or say, as this Father does, it is so written, much less are we to suppose that his words are to be taken in this sense. And whatever *Facundus's* sense was of his words, another who lived in the same century, together with, or a little before him, *viz.* *Fulgentius*, refers, (as the learned author above mentioned^d observes) to this passage of *Cyprian*; not as a mystical explication of *Ver. 8th*. but as distinctly contained in *Ver. 7th*. and, as such, makes use of it against the *Arians*.

As for that known passage in *Tertulian*^e, in which he speaks of the union, or connexion, as he calls it, of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Comforter, making three joined together, and that these three are one, that is, one divine Being, not one Person, and so referring to our Saviour's words, *I and the Father are one*, it is a very good explication of the sense of this text, and discovers that, in that early age of the church, he had a right notion of the doctrine of the Trinity: but whether it be sufficiently evident from hence, that he refers to this scripture under our present consideration, though defending the doctrine contained in it, I will not determine. I shall add no more in the defence of the genuineness of this text, but rather refer the reader to others, who have wrote professedly on this subject^f.

And whereas some of the *Anti-trinitarians* have supposed, that if this scripture were genuine, it don't prove the doctrine of the Trinity, because the words ought to be taken as implying, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are one only in testimony. To this it may be answered, that

though it be an undoubted truth that they agree in testimony, yet it doth not amount to the sense of the words, *They are one*; for if that had been the principal *Idea* designed to be convey'd thereby, no reason can be assigned why the phrase should be different from what it is in the following *Verse*; but it would, doubtless, have been expressed, *εἰς τὸ ἓν εἶναι*, *They agree in one*.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove our Saviour's proper deity from those scriptures that speak of him, not only as being called *Lord* and *God*, but from others, that assert him to have the divine nature, or to be equal with God the Father; we shall now proceed to consider some scriptures, by which it appears, that he asserts this concerning himself; or what proofs we have of his deity from his own words, in several conferences which he held with the *Jews*, by which he gave them reason to conclude that he was God equal with the Father; and the opposition which he met with from them, who, for this reason, charged him with blasphemy, plainly intimates, that they understood his words in this sense. And if it be reply'd to this, as it often is, that nothing can be infer'd to prove his deity from their misunderstanding his words, and so charging him, without ground, to be guilty thereof. To this it may be answer'd, though we do not lay much stress on what they understood to be the meaning of his words; yet it plainly appears, that he intended them in this sense, inasmuch as if they misunderstood him, he did not undeceive them, which certainly he ought to have done, had he not been a divine Person. If any one seems to assume to himself any branch of the glory of God, that does not belong to him, though the ambiguity of words, provided they may be taken in two contrary senses, may, in some measure, excuse him from having had such a design, however unadvisable it be to speak in such a way, yet if he apprehends that they, to whom he directs his discourse, are in the least inclin'd to misunderstand him, he is obliged, from the regard which he has to the divine glory, and the duty which he owes to those with whom he converses, as well as in defence of his own character, to undeceive them; therefore, if our Saviour had not been equal with God,

^d See *True Scripture-doctrine*, &c. Pag. 53.

^e *Contra Praxeam*, Cap. 25.

^f See the authors before refer'd to, in the *True Scripture-doctrine*, &c. as also *Trigland* de tribus in celo testibus.

CHRIST asserts his Deity in Conference with the Jews. 157

he would, doubtless, upon the least suspicion, which the *Jews* might entertain, that he asserted himself to be so, immediately have undeceived them, and would have told them, that they took his words in a wrong sense, and that he was far from usurping that glory, which belonged to God, that had he intended them in that sense, they might justly have called him a blasphemer; this he would, doubtless, have done, had he, by his words, given them occasion to think him a divine Person if he were not so.

Thus the Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when the people at *Lystra*, upon their having wrought a miracle, concluded that they were gods, with what zeal and earnestness did they undeceive them? In *Acts* xiv. 14, 15. 'tis said, when they perceived they were going to offer sacrifice to them, *they rent their cloaths, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like passions with you.* And, at another time, we read, that *Peter* and *John*, in *Acts* iii. 11—13. when they had cured the lame man, tho' the people did not conclude them to be divine persons, yet, perceiving that they were amazed, and being jealous that some thoughts might arise in their minds, as though they had a right to that glory, which belongs to God alone, or that this miracle was to be ascribed to themselves, rather than to him, we read, that *when Peter saw that they marvelled, and that the people ran together, he answer'd, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though, by our own power, or holiness, we had made this man to walk?* and accordingly takes occasion to shew, that the glory hereof was due to none but God.

But our Saviour takes no such method to exculpate himself from this charge of blasphemy; therefore we must suppose they did not mistake his words, but that he intended thereby, that they should understand him to be a divine Person; yea, he is so far from undeceiving them, if they were deceived, that he rather confirms, than denies, the sense, which they put upon them. This appears from *Matt.* ix. 2—5. when they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, to whom, when he healed him, he said, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,* he perceived, that *certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth, supposing that none had power to forgive sins but God.* 'Tis true, the words might

have been understood, as though he had said, *thy sins are forgiven thee, only in a declarative way, as signifying, that the man had obtain'd forgiveness from God, without insinuating thereby, that he had a power, as a divine Person, to forgive sins.* But it is plain, that the *Jews* took his words in this latter sense, from their charging him with blasphemy; but, instead of rectifying the mistake, if it was one, he asserts, that, notwithstanding the meanness of his appearance, while in his humbled state on earth, yet he had a power to forgive sins; and he not only asserts, but proves this, when he says, *Ver. 5. Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Arise, and walk?* Many suppose, that our Saviour hereby intends to establish his deity, by asserting his infinite power, which was exerted in working a miracle, and so it is as though he should say; he that can produce any effect, which is above the laws of nature, as miracles are, at least if he does it by his own power, must be God: But this he had done, and so proved his deity thereby, and consequently his right to forgive sins.

But I am sensible it will be objected to this, that since creatures have wrought miracles, which were as truly and properly so as this that Christ wrought; therefore the working a miracle will not prove the divinity of the person that wrought it, unless we could prove that he did it by his own power, and that we cannot do without supposing his deity, and therefore that ought not to be made use of, as a medium to prove it.

Some, indeed, attempt to prove it from that scripture, *Luke* xi. 20. in which he says, *He cast out devils by the finger of God,* supposing he means hereby his own divine power. Others take notice of something peculiar to himself, as they suppose, in the way of his working miracles, that herein he spake, and acted, like a God. But, since neither of these arguments will be reckon'd conclusive, therefore I would take a method somewhat different, which is not liable to the aforesaid objection, to account for this matter; and that is, that our Saviour first tells the man, that his sins were forgiven him, knowing, before-hand, how this would be resented by the *Scribes*, who would, upon this occasion, charge him with blasphemy, which accordingly they did; and then, to convince them that he was a divine Person, and had a power

158 CHRIST asserts his Deity in Conference with the Jews.

to forgive sin, he wrought a miracle, and so bade the man, sick of the palsy, to *Arise, and walk*; whereby he proved his deity, of which he designed to give an extraordinary conviction, and consequently of his having a power to forgive sin, by an appeal to this miracle. Now, tho' miracles do not argue the divinity of the person that works them, from any visible circumstance contained therein, as but now mentioned, yet they effectually prove it, provided this be the thing contested, and an explicate appeal be made to the divine Power to confirm it by miracles, then they are an undoubted proof thereof, as much as they prove any thing relating to the Christian religion; and, in this sense, I humbly conceive Christ proved his deity by miracles, which he is expressly said elsewhere to have done; as in *John ii. 11.* speaking concerning his first miracle in *Cana of Galilee*, it is said, that thereby *he manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him*, where by *his glory* is, doubtless, meant his divine glory; for the faith of his disciples, which was consequent hereupon, was a divine faith: and we never read of the glory of Christ, in his humbled state more especially, but it must import the glory of his deity, which his disciples are said, in some measure, to behold, when they believed in him. This Christ confirmed by his miracles, in the same way, as his mission was confirmed thereby. By this means, therefore, he proved his deity, and consequently his right to forgive sin; and therefore was so far from endeavouring to convince the *Jews*, that they were mistaken in thinking him a divine Person, that he farther insists on, and proves, that he was so.

There is another conference which our Saviour held with the *Jews*, mentioned *John v.* in which we read, that, after he had healed a lame man on the sabbath-day, for which *Ver. 16.* *The Jews sought to slay him, as a sabbath-breaker*, he replies, *Ver. 17.* *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; upon which they were more enraged, and, as it is said, *Ver. 18.* *sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* It is plain they understood his words, as importing that he was equal with God; and, indeed, they could do no otherwise, for he compares his works with God's, and speaks of himself as working co-ordinately with him.

Certainly our works ought not to be mentioned at the same time with God's, therefore they suppose that he asserted himself to be a divine Person, and farther proved it, by calling God his Father; which, according to the sense in which they understood it, denoted an equality with him. Hereupon they charge him with blasphemy, and go about to kill him for it. Now it is certain, that, if he had not been equal with God, he ought to have undeceived them, which he might easily have done, by telling them, that though I call God my Father, I intend nothing hereby, but that I worship, reverence, and yield obedience to him; or that I am his Son, by a special instance of favour, in such a sense as a creature may be; but far be it from me to give you the least occasion to think that I am equal with God, for that would be to rob him of his glory: but we find that our Saviour is far from denying his equality with the Father, but rather establishes and proves it in the following *Verses.*

It is true, indeed, in some passages thereof, he ascribes to himself the weakness of a man, as having therein respect to his human nature, which is included in his being the Messiah and Mediator, as well as his divine: thus he says, *Ver. 19.* *The Son, viz. as man, can do nothing of himself*; and *Ver. 20.* *The Father sheweth him all things*; but, in other passages, he proves that he had a divine nature, and farther confirms what he had before asserted, namely, that he was equal with God; in *Ver. 21.* *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* Observe, he not only speaks of himself, as having divine power, but sovereignty; the former, in that he quickeneth; the latter, in that he does it according to his own will or pleasure; and, in *Ver. 23.* he signifies his expectation from men, that *all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* Thus he lays claim to divine glory, as well as ascribes to himself the prerogative of raising the whole world, at the general resurrection, and determining their state, either of happiness or misery, *Ver. 28, 29.* *Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.* From hence, therefore, we may

CHRIST asserts his Deity in Conference with the Jews. 159

may conclude, that our Saviour was so far from disclaiming the charge of being equal with God, which they called blasphemy, that he proves it by arguments yet more convincing.

Another conference, which he held with the *Jews* about this matter, we read of in *John* viii. wherein, taking occasion to speak concerning *Abraham*, who rejoiced to see his day, he tells them plainly, *Ver. 58. Before Abraham was, I am*; not intending hereby, as the *Arians* suppose, that he was the first creature, but that he was equal with God; and, indeed, there seems to be something in his mode of speaking that argues his asserting his eternal and unchangeable deity. The phrase here used is the same, with a little variation, with that which is used to set forth the eternity and immutability of God, in *Isai. xliii. 13. Before the day was, I am he*. If the prophet is to be understood, as asserting that God the Father existed before time, before the day was, or the course of nature began, why may we not suppose our Saviour to intend as much, when he says, *Before Abraham was, I am*.

However, since it will be objected, that this, at best, is but a probable argument, though it is such as many of the Fathers have made use of in defending his deity, yet we will not lay the whole stress of our cause upon it, but may observe, that whatever critical remark others may make on the sense of the words, it is certain the *Jews* understood them no otherwise, than as implying, that he thought himself equal with God; therefore it is said, *Ver. 59. that they took up stones to stone him*; which was a punishment inflicted, under the law, on blasphemers; and ought he not, had they misunderstood his words, to have cleared himself from this imputation, if he had not been equal with God? But he is far from doing this; for it is said, in the following words, *that he hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by*.

Again, there is another conference, which he held with the *Jews*, mention'd in *John* x. in which he speaks like a divine Person in several Verses; as *Ver. 14. I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine*; which is the same that is ascribed to God, in *Psal. cxiii. 1. The Lord is my Shepherd*; and he lays claim to his church, whom he calls his sheep, as his own; and, *Ver. 18. he speaks of himself, as having a power over his*

own life; *I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it again*; which is a greater instance of dominion than belongs to a creature, who has not a power to dispose of his own life at pleasure; and, in *Ver. 28. he ascends yet higher in his expression, when he speaks of himself, as having a power to give eternal life to his people, which is certainly the gift of none but God*; and when, in *Ver. 29. he owns himself to be inferior to his Father, as man; notwithstanding, in Ver. 30. he plainly asserts his deity, when he says, I and my Father are one*.

Object. 1. The *Anti-trinitarians* object to this, that Christ did not speak of himself as one with the Father, any otherwise than in consent, or, at least, as having power and authority derived from him.

Ans. To say that those words, I and my Father are one, imply nothing more than that they are One in consent, does not well agree with the sense of the foregoing words, in which he speaks of the greatness, and the power of his Father, and in this of his being One with him. Besides, had he only meant his being One with him in consent, as implying the subjection of all the powers and faculties of his soul to him, that is a sense in which every good man may be said to be one with God; therefore the Jews would not have charged him with blasphemy for it, which, 'tis plain, they did, and took up stones to stone him, if his own words had not given them ground to conclude that he intended more than this, namely, that he was one in nature with God. It is therefore farther objected,

Object. 2. That the *Jews*, indeed, misunderstood him, and nothing can be infered from their stupidity, to prove his deity: but he seems, in the following Verses, to do more to the undeceiving them, than he had done in some of the foregoing instances; for he tells them plainly the reason why he spake of himself as a God, namely, because he was a prophet; and these were called gods, to whom the word of God came, or, at least, that he had a right to be so called, from his being sanctified, and sent into the world.

Ans. By these expressions, he does not intend to set himself upon a level with the prophets of old, but they contain an argument from the less to the greater; and so it is, as though he should say, If some persons, who made a considerable figure in the church of old, and were sent about important services to them,

are

160 CHRIST asserts his Deity in Conference with the Jews.

are called gods, I have much more reason to claim that character, as having been sanctified, and sent into the world about the great work of redemption, consecrated, or set apart, to glorify the divine perfections therein, which work, as will be observed under a following head, proves his deity; and therefore we are not to suppose that he disclaims it, when he speaks of himself, as engaged therein. Then he proceeds yet farther, in asserting his deity, when he speaks of his *being in the Father, and the Father in him*, which, it is certain, the Jews took in a very different sense from what those words are taken in, when applied to creatures, for they concluded, that he spake of himself as a divine Person; for it follows, *Ver. 39. that they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hand*; so that he still gives them occasion to conclude, that he was God equal with the Father.

Thus he asserted his deity in all these various conferences with the Jews; in which, if he had not been what they apprehended him to insinuate that he was, many charges must have been brought against him; not only as to what concerns matters of common prudence, as incensing the people by ambiguous expressions, and thereby hazarding his own life; but his holiness would have been called in question, had he given occasion to them, to think that he assumed to himself divine glory, had he not had a right to it.

And this leads us to consider that last publick testimony, which he gave to his deity, in the presence of the Sanhedrim, which, in some respects, may be said to have cost him his life, when he stood before *Pontius Pilate*; upon which occasion, the Apostle says, *1 Tim. vi. 13. that he witnessed a good confession*: this we have recorded, *Matt. xxvi. 61.* where we observe, that when false witnesses were suborn'd to testify against him, who contradicted one another in their evidence, upon which the High Priest desired that he would make a reply to what they said, in his own defence, he did not think that worthy of an answer, and therefore held his peace: but when he was asked, in the most solemn manner, and adjured, by the living God, to tell them, *Whether he were the Christ, the Son of God?* that is, the Messiah, whom the Jews expected, who governed his church of old, and whom they acknow-

ledged to be a divine Person, or the Son of God; here the whole matter is left to his own determination. Had he denied this, he would have saved his life; and, if he confessed it, he was like to die for it. On this occasion, he does not hold his peace, or refuse to answer; therefore, says he, *Ver. 64. Thou hast said*; which is as though he had said, *It is as thou hast said, I am the Christ, the Son of God*; and then, in the following words, *Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*; whereupon the High Priest rent his cloaths, and appealed to the people, that they had heard his blasphemy, and accordingly they judged him worthy of death. Here we observe, that he not only asserts himself to be the Son of God, and to have a right to the glory of a divine Person, but, as a farther confirmation thereof, applies to himself a text, which the Jews supposed to belong to the Messiah, *Dan. vii. 13. I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one, like the son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, &c.* So that, from all this, it follows, that if Christ, when he conversed occasionally with the Jews, or when he was called before the Sanhedrim, asserts himself to be the Son of God, which includes in it his deity, and so does not shun to speak of himself, as equal with God, we have the doctrine, which we are defending, maintained by himself; therefore we must conclude, that he really is what he declared himself to be, namely, God equal with the Father.

II. We proceed to consider how our Saviour's deity appears, from those divine attributes, which are ascribed to him, which are proper to God alone; to which we shall add, those high and glorious titles, by which he is described in scripture: the attributes of God, as has been before observed^s, are all essential to him, and therefore cannot, in a proper sense, be any of them applied to a creature, as they are to Christ, which will be particularly consider'd in some following heads.

1. He is said to be eternal, and that not only without end, as the Angels and Saints in heaven shall be, but from everlasting: this appears from *Micah v. 2. Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*. If his goings forth have been from everlasting, then he existed

^s See Quest. VII.

from everlasting, for action supposes existence; nothing more than this can be said to prove that the Father was from everlasting: and that this is spoken of our Saviour is very plain, from the reference to this text, in *Matt. ii. 6.* where the former part of this *Verse* is quoted and explain'd, as signifying our Saviour's being born in *Bethlehem*; therefore the latter part of it, *whose goings forth, &c.* must belong to him. Again, he is said, in *John i. 1.* to have been *in the beginning*; observe, it is not said he was *from*, but *in*, the beginning; therefore it is plain, that he existed when all things began to be, and consequently was from eternity.

When we consider this divine perfection, as belonging to our Saviour, we militate against both the *Socinians* and the *Arians*; as for the former, they deny that he had any existence, properly speaking, before his conception in the womb of the virgin *Mary*, and interpret all those scriptures that speak of his pre-existence to it, such as that in *John viii. 58.* *Before Abraham was, I am*, or that *the Word was in the beginning*, as importing either, that he was from eternity, in the decree and purpose of God, relating to his incarnation, in which sense every thing that comes to pass was eternal, as fore-ordain'd by God, which is therefore a very absurd exposition of such-like texts; or else they suppose, that his being in the beginning signifies nothing else but his being the Founder of the gospel-state, which cannot be the sense of the Evangelist's words, because he is said *to be with God*; and it immediately follows, *and all things were made by him*, which every unprejudiced reader would suppose to intend the creation of the world, and not the erecting the gospel-dispensation; this therefore evidently appears to be a perversion of the sense of the text.

As for the *Arians*, they distinguish between Christ's being in the beginning of time, and his being from eternity; and so they suppose the meaning of the text to be, that *the Word was from the beginning*; and, whatever disguise they seem to put upon their mode of speaking, when they say there was not a point of time in which Christ was not, or that he was before the world, they are far from asserting that he was without beginning, or properly from eternity.

And, in answer hereunto, let it be consider'd, that we cannot conceive of any medium between time and eternity; therefore whatever was before time,

must be from eternity, in the same sense in which God is eternal. That this may appear, let us consider that time is the measure of finite beings; therefore it is very absurd, and little less than a contradiction, to say that there was any finite being produced before time; for that is, in effect, to assert that a limited duration is antecedent to that measure, whereby it is determined, or limited. If we should allow that there might have been some things created before God began to create the heavens and the earth, though these things might be said to have had a being longer than time has had, yet they could not have existed before time, for time would have began with them; therefore if Christ had been created a thousand millions of ages before the world, it could not be said that he existed before time; but it would be infer'd from hence, that time, which would have taken its beginning from his existence, had continued so many ages; therefore that which existed before time, must have existed before all finite beings, and consequently was not produced out of nothing, or did not begin to be, and is properly from eternity; therefore I cannot but think the objection evasive, or a fruitless attempt to take off the force of this argument, to prove our Saviour's deity, since the expressions of scripture, by which his eternity is set forth, are as strong and emphatical, as those whereby the Father's is express'd, and consequently his deity is equally evident.

2. Our Saviour is said to be unchangeable, which perfection not only belongs to God, but is that whereby he is consider'd as opposed to all created beings, which are dependent upon him, and therefore changed, by him, at his pleasure. Now that Christ is immutable, is evident, if we compare the words of the Psalmist, *Psal. cii. 25-27.* *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end,* with *Heb. ii. 10.* where the Apostle uses the same words, and considers them as applied to Christ; so that it will be a very hard matter for any to evade the force of this argument. I am perswaded, that if the Apostle had not applied these words to Christ, the *Anti-trinitarians*

162 CHRIST'S Deity prov'd from his being Unchangeable.

would have allowed, that the Psalmist gives as plain an account of the immutability of God, as can be found in scripture, or, indeed, as words can express. Some of the writers on that side of the question, have pass'd over this scripture, as thinking, I suppose, that it is better not to attempt to account for it consistently with their scheme, than to do it in such a way, as will not, in the least, support it: others don't care to own that they are applied to Christ; but that is to break the chain of the Apostle's reasoning, and thereby to fasten an absurdity upon him. Now, that we may briefly consider the connection between this and the foregoing *Verses*, whereby it will evidently appear that our Saviour is the Person here described, as unchangeable, let us consider, that the design of this chapter is to set forth the mediatorial glory of Christ, to establish his superiority to Angels; and, after he had refer'd to that scripture, which speaks of the eternity of his kingdom, to wit, the 45th Psalm, *Ver. 6.* he then speaks of him as unchangeable, and so applies the words of the Psalmist, but now mention'd, to him: we may also observe, in the text, that he is not only unchangeable, as to his existence, but his duration is unchangeable, which farther confirms what was observed under the last head, that he is eternal, as God is, *viz.* without succession, as well as from everlasting: this seems to be contained in that expression, *Thou art the same, thy years shall not fail*, as though he should say, thy duration does not slide, or pass away by successive moments, as the duration of time and created beings does.

To this we might add what the Apostle says, *Heb. xiii. 8.* that he *is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, that is, throughout all the changes of time, he remains unchangeably the same in his being, and in all the perfections of his divine nature. A late writer^a supposes the meaning of this scripture to be nothing but this, that the doctrine of Christ, once taught by the Apostles, ought to be preserved unchanged: It is true, he says elsewhereⁱ, that it is certainly true that the Person of Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; whether, by yesterday, he means any thing more than a limited duration of time past, which he must do, or else give up the doctrine that he every where contends for, I cannot tell; but he does not think that this

text respects the Person of Christ, but his doctrine, as above mentioned; the principal argument by which he proves it is, its supposed connection with the foregoing *Verses*; and so it is as though he should say; Have regard to what has been delivered to you by those who have preached the word of God, who, though they are no more among you, yet the doctrine they have delivered is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. But it seems to be too great a strain on the sense of words, to suppose *Christ* to import the same with *his doctrine*; and, with submission, I cannot think that this is to be infer'd from what goes before, or follows after it; but the sense seems to be this, *q. d.* adhere to the doctrines you have formerly received from those who have preached the word of God to you, and be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, so as to change your sentiments with your teachers, for that would not be to act in conformity to Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; so that he designs to establish their faith from the consideration of Christ's immutability, whatever changes they are liable to from the death of their teachers, or the innovations of those who succeed them, and endeavour to carry them away by divers and strange doctrines; so the text seems to be as plain a proof of our Saviour's immutability, as that scripture, *Rev. i. 4.* is of the immutability of God, in which it is said, *He is, was, and is to come.* If, by his being *yesterday*, we are to understand, as some do, his managing the affairs of his church under the legal dispensation; and *to day*, his governing them under this present dispensation; and *for ever*, the eternity of his kingdom, it plainly proves, that whatever changes he has made in the affairs of the government of the church and of the world, yet he is the same, and consequently a divine Person.

3. Another divine attribute ascribed to our Saviour, is omnipresence, as in *Matt. xviii. 20.* *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*; which expression imports the same thing, with that whereby the divine omnipresence (as is allowed by all) is set forth in *Exod. xx. 24.* *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* Now that Christ's presence in the midst of his people, in all places, argues his omnipresence, is very evident, since he designs,

^a See Dr. Clark's Scripture-doctrine, Pag. 127.

ⁱ Reply to Nelson, Pag. 169.

by this promise, to encourage them in all places, and at all times, to perform religious duties, with an eye to this privilege; so that where-ever there is a worshipping assembly, they have hereby ground to expect that he will be present with them. Now 'tis certain, that no creature can be in two places at the same time, much less in all places, which is the same as to *fill heaven and earth*, and is applicable to God alone, as the prophet expresses it, in *Jer. xxiii. 24.* Moreover, when Christ says, that he will be with his people in all places, it must be meant at the same time, and not successively, otherwise he could not be where-ever two or three are met in his name; this therefore is a plain proof of his omnipresence, which is an incommunicable perfection of the divine nature, and consequently argues him to be true and proper God.

Object. 1. 'Tis objected to the sense we have given of this scripture, (to weaken the force of the argument taken from it) that our Saviour is here said to be present, only by his authority, where two or three are met together in his name; and accordingly the words are to be taken in a metaphorical sense, as when a king is said to be present in all parts of his dominions, where persons, who are deputed to represent him, act by his authority.

Ans. w. Though we allow, that whatever is done in Christ's name, must be said to be done by his authority; yet we cannot allow that his being in the midst of them is to be taken only for his being so by his authority; for we must not suppose that our Saviour, in these words, makes use of a tautology; and, indeed, it would be a very jejune and empty way of speaking to say, that where two or three are met together in my name, that is, by my authority, there am I in the midst of them, by my authority. Certainly, Christ's being in the midst of them, must be taken in the same sense with that parallel scripture before refer'd to, in *Exod. xx. 24.* where God's coming to his people, in those places where he records his name, is explain'd, as having a very great privilege attending it, namely, his *blessing them*, which he is said to do, when he confers blessedness upon them, and gives them a full and rich supply of all their wants; this therefore must be the sense of our Saviour's being in the midst of his people.

Moreover, as God is said to be present where he acts; so Christ's powerful influence, granted to his people in all places, which supposes his omnipresence, contains a great deal more than his being present by his authority; and if that were the only sense in which this scripture is to be taken, it might as well be alledged, that all the scriptures, which speak of the divine omnipresence, might be taken in that sense, which would be to set aside all the proofs we have from thence of this perfection of the divine nature; therefore this objection seems to be rather an evasion, than an argument, to overthrow Christ's divinity, taken from his omnipresence.

Object. 2. Others suppose that Christ, being in the midst of his people, when met together in his name, implies nothing more than his knowing what they do when engaged in acts of religious worship.

Ans. w. We observe, that they who make use of this objection, that they may militate against that argument, which is brought to prove his deity from his omnipresence, will, for argument's sake, allow him to be omniscient, not considering that that equally proves him to be a divine Person, as will be considered under our next *Head*. Now, to prove that Christ's being present with his people, is to be understood of his knowing what they do, they refer to that scripture, *2 Kings v. 26.* in which *Elisha* says to *Gebazi*, as knowing what he had done, when he followed *Naaman*, the Syrian, for a reward, *Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee.* But since this scripture signifies nothing else but that this secret was revealed to him, which is, in a figurative way of speaking, as though he had been present with him, it will not follow from hence that the prophet pretended to know whatever was done in all places, and that at all times, which is more (as will be farther observ'd under our next *Head*) than what seems communicable to any creature: but this is intended by Christ's knowing all things, and more than this, doubtless, is meant by his being in the midst of his people, whereby he encourages them to expect those blessings, which they stand in need of, from him, in which respect he promises to be with them in a way of grace; and certainly he that is so present with his people, must be concluded to be, in the most proper sense, a divine Person.

There

164 CHRIST'S Omnipresence prov'd, from John iii. 13.

There is another scripture, which is generally brought to prove Christ's omnipresence, and consequently his proper deity, to wit, *John iii. 13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.* For the understanding of which words, we must consider their connection with what goes immediately before; thus by, *No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven,* 'tis plain our Saviour means, that no man has a full and comprehensive knowledge of heavenly things, of which he had been speaking in the foregoing *Verse*, but he that came down from heaven; in which he asserts his divine omniscience^k, as the Person in whom all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, as it is express'd elsewhere; or none knows the mysteries which are hid in God, but he that is in the bosom of the Father, who came down from heaven; or, as the Apostle expresses it, *1 Cor. xv. 47. who is the Lord from heaven*; and then, as a farther proof of his deity, he adds, that *he is in heaven*, that is, while he was on earth, in one nature, as being omnipresent, he was in heaven in the other nature; and, agreeably to this sense of the scripture, he is said to *come down from heaven*, as his divine nature manifested its glory here on earth, when the human nature was united to it, which is the only sense in which God is said to come down into this lower world; as we have the same mode of speaking, in *Gen. xi. 7. Exod. iii. 8.* and other places; so that if he is thus omnipresent, we must conclude that he is a divine Person.

The *Arians* give a very different sense of this text, especially those words, *The Son of man, who is in heaven*; for, they suppose, the words ought to be render'd, *was in heaven*; and that it does not argue his omnipresence, but that that nature, which they call divine, first resided in heaven from the beginning, when it was produced by the Father; and afterwards, in his incarnation, by a removal from heaven to earth, it was said to come down from thence. But, before we allow of this sense of the text, they must prove that Christ was the first creature, and that, in this finite nature, he resided in heaven till his incarnation, and that he afterwards, by a change of place, descended into this lower world; and, if they could make this appear,

there is yet a difficulty in the expression, as they understand the words; for 'tis not usual to say, I came from a place, and was in that place before I came from it; therefore whether their exposition of the words, or ours, be most proper, I leave any one to judge.

As for the *Socinians*, who deny that Christ had any existence before his incarnation, these are very much at a loss to account for the sense of this scripture; though *Socinus* himself, and many of his followers, have concluded from thence, that Christ was taken up into heaven some time after his incarnation, which they suppose to have been in some part of those forty days, in which the scripture says he was in the wilderness tempted of the devil; but how he could ascend into heaven, and yet be in the wilderness, where one of the Evangelists says he was all the forty days, as *Mark i. 13.* cannot be easily understood, or accounted for; and, indeed, the scripture is altogether silent as to this matter: and it is very strange, if it had been so, that when we have an account of other circumstances in his life, which are of less importance, no mention should be made of this, which, had it been discovered, would have been a great inducement to his followers, to have paid the highest regard to his doctrine; for they suppose he was taken up into heaven, that he might be instructed in those things which he was to impart to the world. And, instead of a proof hereof, they only say that this is a parallel instance with that of *Moses*, who was called up to the top of mount *Sinai*, which was then the immediate seat of the divine presence, and there received the law, which he was to impart to *Israel*; so, they suppose, it was necessary that our Saviour should ascend into heaven, that he might there be instructed in that doctrine, which he was to communicate to his church.

But we cannot but conclude, that being omniscient, as will be proved under our next *Head*, he had no need to receive instructions, and having, in his human nature, had an unction from the Holy Ghost; or, as it is expressed, *John iii. 34. that God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him*; therefore it was not necessary that he should ascend into heaven, to receive the doctrines from thence, which he was to deliver. Moreover, according to this conjecture, his coming from heaven, in the end of time, to

^k See a parallel scripture, *Prov. xxx. 2, 3.*

judge the world, should have been called his *third* coming, (as his first coming from thence was in his incarnation, and his second coming is supposed to be his return to this world, after he ascended into heaven, during this interval of time) which is contrary to that text of scripture, in *Heb. ix. 28.* which calls it, *his coming the second time, without sin, unto salvation*; and, indeed, it is so ungrounded a supposition, that some of the Socinians themselves reckon it, at most, but a probable conjecture, but do not pretend to say that it is sufficiently founded in scripture; and therefore we cannot think that this will have any tendency to enervate the force of our argument, to prove Christ's deity taken from the above-mentioned sense of that text; *The Son of man; which is in heaven.*

4. Our Saviour's deity may farther be proved, from his being omniscient: thus the Apostle Peter says, in *John xxi. 17.* *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* This is too great a glory to be ascribed to any creature; and had it been spoken of the Father, the *Anti-trinitarians* themselves would have own'd, that it is as great a proof of his deity, as any contain'd in scripture, as importing the same thing with what the Psalmist says, *Psal. cxlvii. 5.* *His understanding is infinite*: but, besides this, there is another expression that abundantly proves this matter, wherein he is denominated the searcher of hearts, which is a glory that God appropriates to himself, in *Jer. xvii. 10.* *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways*; and elsewhere, *1 Chron. xxviii. 9.* *The Lord searcheth all hearts; and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts*; and all creatures are excluded from having any branch of this glory, when it is said, in *1 Kings viii. 39.* *Thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men*: now such a knowledge as this is ascribed to Christ; sometimes he is said to know the *inward thoughts and secret reasonings of men within themselves*, *Mark ii. 8.* And, if it be said, that this is only a particular instance of knowledge, such as he might have had by an immediate divine inspiration, and therefore that it does not prove his Godhead; there is another scripture, that speaks of his knowledge, as more extensive, or that he knows the thoughts of all men, *John ii. 25.* *He needed not that any one should testify of man, for he knew what was in man*; and that his

knowledge does not only respect mens present; but their future thoughts, which are not known to themselves: thus it is said, in *John vi. 64.* that *he knew from the beginning who they were that believed not; and who should betray him.* And if all this be not reckon'd sufficient to prove him to be the heart-searching God, nothing can be express'd in plainer terms than this is, concerning him, in *Rev. ii. 23.* *All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you, according to your works.*

Object. 1. 'Tis objected to this argument for Christ's omniscience, taken from Peter's confession above-mention'd, *Lord, thou knowest all things, &c.* that nothing else is intended hereby, but that he had a very great degree of knowledge; but not that he was strictly and properly omniscient, as supposing that it is an hyperbolical expression, not altogether unlike that of the woman of Tekoa to David, in *2 Sam. xiv. 20.* when she says, *My Lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.*

Answ. 'Tis true, this expression of her's is either an unwarrantable strain of complement, or flattery, occasion'd by David's suspecting that Joab had employ'd her to plead the cause of Absalom; or else it is a sincere acknowledgment of his great wisdom, without supposing him to be absolutely omniscient, as though she should say, thou knowest all things that are done in the land: there is no plot or contrivance, how secret soever it may be managed, but thou wilt, some way or other, find it out, as thou hast done this that I am sent about. But what reference has this to Peter's confession? Does it follow, that because there are hyperbolical expressions in scripture, as well as in other writings, that this must be one? or because a wise governor may have a conjectural knowledge of what is done by his subjects, when considering the various circumstances that attend their actions, that therefore the Apostle intends nothing more than this? 'Tis plain he appeals to Christ, as the heart-searching God, concerning the inward sincerity of his love to him, as well as of his repentance, after a publick and shameful denial of him, which might have given just occasion for its being called in question; and it is as evident a proof of his omniscience, as that is of the Father's, in *Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.*

166 *Objections against CHRIST's Omniscience answer'd.*

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, &c.

Object. 2. Others, especially some of the *Arians*, do not so much deny Christ's omniscience, as the consequence deduced from it, to wit, his proper deity; and these make use of a more abstruse and metaphysical way of reasoning, and accordingly they suppose that a creature may know all things, that is, all finite objects, and consequently all things that are done in the world, namely, all creatures, and all their actions, since the object of this knowledge is, at most, but finite; therefore 'tis possible for a finite mind to be so enlarged, as to take in all finite things, or to have the knowledge of all things communicated to it, since the object and the recipient are commensurate with each other. Therefore our Saviour may know all things; and yet it will not follow from hence, that his understanding is infinite, or that his knowledge is so properly divine as the Father's is; and consequently this is no sufficient argument to prove his deity in the sense in which we understand it.

Ans. w. This method of reasoning might as well be used to evade the force of every argument, brought from scripture, to prove the Father's omniscience, or, indeed, to evince his infinite power, since all effects produced, which are the objects thereof, are but finite; and therefore it may as well be said, that it does not require infinite power to produce them, nor prove his eternal power and Godhead.

Moreover, as this would tend to destroy the infinite disproportion between God and the creature in acting, so it supposes that God can communicate a branch of his own glory to a creature, by enlarging it to such a degree, as to take in all finite objects. There are some things not so properly too great for God to do, as for a creature to be the subject of: we do not pretend to set limits to the divine power; yet we may infer, from the nature of things, and the powers of finite beings, that it is impossible for any one, below God, to know all things past, present, and to come, at one view; which our Saviour must be supposed to do, or else this attribute of omniscience is not justly applied to him; nor would he be fit to govern the world, as will be observed under a following *Head*; therefore we must conclude, from hence, that

he is truly and properly a divine Person.

To what has been said, concerning Christ's omniscience, we may subjoin those scriptures that speak of him, as the *wisdom of God*, the Fountain of all communicated wisdom, *the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, as he is called, in *John* i. 9. And it is supposed, by many, that *wisdom* spoken of in *Prov.* viii. is to be understood of our Saviour, as the personal wisdom of God, inasmuch as there are several personal characters ascribed to him: thus 'tis said, *Ver.* 23. *I was set up from everlasting, &c.* and, *Ver.* 30, 31. *Then, to wit, before the creation of all things, I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.* This cannot, properly speaking, be applied to God's essential wisdom; it must therefore be a description of an eternal divine Person, distinct from the Father.

But since many suppose, that whatever is spoken of wisdom, in this and some other *Chapters* of this book, is only metaphorical, or a beautiful description of divine wisdom, as the instructor of mankind; though we cannot see how this, if nothing else be intended by it, can agree with some of the personal characters before mentioned, which seem applicable to our Saviour; yet we find that he is elsewhere called the *wisdom of God*, in a sense, that can by no means be supposed to be figurative: thus when we read in *Luke* xi. 49. *Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, &c.* it is certainly understood of our Saviour; to which, if it be objected, that, by the *wisdom of God*, is meant there the wise God, to wit, the Father, it may be answer'd, that another Evangelist, referring to the very same thing, explains what is meant by the *wisdom of God*, and represents our Saviour as speaking in his own Person, *Matt.* xxiii. 34. *Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, &c.*

5. The next divine perfection that is ascribed to Christ, is almighty power. This attribute is appropriated, by the *Arians*, to the *Father*¹; and accordingly they suppose, that it implies not only his supremacy over all creatures, but over the Son and Holy Ghost; and therefore

¹ See Dr. Clark's Scripture-doctrine, pag. 63.

they peremptorily conclude it is never applied to them, and consequently that the deity of our Saviour cannot be proved by it; and that they may turn our own weapons upon us, or improve some unwary concessions, made by some very considerable writers, who have, in other respects, very well defended the doctrine of the Trinity, they seem to insinuate, as though this were a matter to be taken, as it were, for granted, though it might easily be made appear, that they strain the sense of those expressions, from whence they conclude them to have given up the cause to them, beyond what they ever intended; and there are many others, who are far from making such concessions.

As for the word *παντοκράτωρ*, Almighty, there is nothing in the derivation thereof; from whence it may justly be infer'd, that it is a perfection; that contains a greater display of the divine glory, than the other perfections, that are attributed to all the Persons in the Godhead, tho' indeed it contains in it an *Idea* of the universal extent of divine power, with respect to the objects thereof; yet this is not to be separated from the sense of the word, when power is ascribed to God in those scriptures, where he is called *the Almighty*; therefore, if we can prove that Christ has power ascribed to him, that is properly divine; this will evince his deity; as much as though we could produce several scriptures, in which he is indisputably called *the Almighty*; and this we shall first endeavour to do, and then enquire whether we have not as much, or more reason to conclude that he is called Almighty, than they have to deny it.

That power, such as is properly divine, is attributed to Christ, may be proved from that scripture before mention'd, which is evidently applied to him, *Isai. ix. 6.* where he is called, *the mighty God*; and, in *Psal. xlv. 3.* which, as has been before observed, is spoken concerning him, in which he is called *most mighty*; and, in *Phil. iii. 21.* we read of his *changing our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*; which is such an effect of power, as plainly argues it divine, as much as the production of all things out of nothing could do; and this is said to be done, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. We might observe many other things, which he has done, and will do, that require

infinite power, which we shall have occasion to consider, when we prove his deity from his works, under a following Head.

But since all this is to no purpose, with respect to those who deny his proper deity, unless we can prove that he is called *Almighty*; and the whole stress of this argument is laid upon it; for no other reason, as I presume, but because they think it impossible for us to do it, I shall attempt it, and I hope to make it appear that we have greater probability, on our side, that he is so called, than they have ground to deny it. And here I shall take notice of this perfection of the divine nature, as we find it in the book of the *Revelations*, in which this attribute is mentioned nine times; and, in some places, seems to be applied to the Father, but in others to the Son.

The first we shall mention is in *Chap. i. 8.* *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was; and which is to come, the Almighty*; which seems to be spoken of our Saviour.

1. Because he is described at large in the three foregoing Verses; and there is nothing which gives the least ground to question its application to him, unless that character's being given to the Person here spoken of, which is given to the Father, in *Ver. 4.* *Which is, and which was, and which is to come*; but since we find, in other scriptures, the same divine glories ascribed to the Son that had before been ascribed to the Father; as in *John v. 21.* *As the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will*; and in *Tit. iii. 4.* the Father is called *God our Saviour*; as appears by comparing it with the 5th and 6th Verses; and so is Christ called, *Chap. ii. 10, 13.* Therefore, why may not the Father and the Son be each of them described with this character, *which was, is, and is to come*? and that more especially if we consider that the ascribing this to Christ, is, in effect, the same with what is said of him elsewhere, *Heb. xiii. 8.* where he is said *to be the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*^m.

2. It farther appears, that this text, in which the Person spoken of is called *Almighty*, is applied to Christ, because that character, *Alpha and Omega*, seems to be applied to none but him; in other places, where it is used, as we find it

^m See Pag. 162.

four times in this book, viz. not only in this *Verse*, but in *Ver. 11.* in which it is indisputably applied to him, as will appear, by comparing it with the following *Verses*. And, in *Chap. xxi. 6.* he is again called *Alpha* and *Omega*, which that it is applied to him, appears from the context; it is he that *makes all things new*, or puts a new face upon the affairs of his church; and 'tis he who commands *John* to write what he saw and heard; *He said unto me write these words, Ver. 5.* We may observe, that where-ever *John* is commanded, in this book, to write, it is Christ that gives forth the command: thus he said to him before, *Chap. i. 19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter*; and he is again commanded to write, *Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord*, by him who is called the Son of man, *Chap. xiv. 13, 14.*

Again, in *Chap. xxii. 13.* he is called *Alpha* and *Omega*, who is described, in the foregoing *Verse*, as coming quickly, whose reward is with him; which is undoubtedly meant of our Saviour; for it is said concerning him, *Ver. 20. Surely I come quickly, Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus.* That which I infer from hence is, that if Christ be stiled *Alpha* and *Omega*, in all other places in this book, it is more than probable he is so in this 8th *Verse* of the 1st Chapter, in which he is said to be *the Almighty*. And as he is called *Alpha* and *Omega*, so the explication of these words, where-ever we meet with it in this book without the words themselves, is applied to Christ: thus he is called, *Chap. i. 17. and ii. 8. the first and the last*; and, *Chap. iii. 14. the beginning of the creation of God*: from hence, I humbly conceive, we have more ground to conclude, that Christ is called *the Almighty* in this *Verse*, than the *Arians* have to deny it.

Again, there is another place in this book where he seems to be stiled *the Almighty*, *Chap. xv. 3. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.* This triumphant song is occasion'd by one of the greatest victories which the church expects to obtain in this world: by the song of *Moses*, I humbly conceive, is meant the churches celebrating the glory of God, for the greatest victory that ever was obtain'd under the legal dispensation; and the song of the

Lamb, is an acknowledgment of the greatest that is, or shall be, obtain'd under the gospel-dispensation; and, in celebrating the Lamb's victories, they set forth the praises of this mighty Conqueror in the following words, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty*: it is the Lamb that is every where described in this book; as fighting the churches battles, and obtaining victory for it; therefore it is his glory which is here set forth.

And as he is always described, in this book, as thus fighting the churches battles, so it is he who is described as taking vengeance on its enemies, which is the just consequence thereof; therefore I cannot but conclude, that he is spoken of, in *Chap. xvi. 6, 7.* as having given their persecutors blood to drink, for they were worthy; and, in *Ver. 7. Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

Again, in *Chap. xvi. 14.* we read of the battle of that great day of God Almighty; and then it immediately follows, *Behold, I come as a thief in the night, &c.* which expression is known to be elsewhere applied to our Saviour, and to none but him; and that it is he who fights the churches battles, is evident, from *Chap. xvii. 14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them*; and, from *Chap. xix. 12, &c.* it is said, *his eyes were as a flame of fire*; as he is elsewhere described, *Chap. i. 14.* to denote that the great day of his wrath was come; and his name is called, in the 13th *Verse* of this xixth Chapter, *the Word of God*; and we read of the armies which followed him, and that out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that he might smite the nations; from whence we may conclude, that since Christ is represented, in so many places in this book, as fighting with, and triumphing and reigning over his enemies, inflicting his plagues upon them, and delivering his church from their persecutions, which is a work of divine power, he is fitly stiled, in several places, *Lord God Almighty*.

We might consider several other divine attributes ascribed to Christ, which prove his deity, viz. holiness, truth, and faithfulness: thus, in *Rev. iii. 7. These things saith he that is holy, he that is true*; and he is farther described in the following words, as having uncontrollable power; *who openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*; that this is spoken of him, is beyond dispute; and

and, in *Chap. vi. 10.* They cried, with a loud voice, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* to whom did they cry but to the Lamb, who is said to have opened the seals, or to have discover'd the mysteries that were thereby revealed, as in *Ver. 1?* And when he had open'd the sixth seal, he is described, as hearing his churches prayer, and avenging their blood; and so is represented as coming to judgment, in a very awful and terrible manner; upon which occasion it is said, *the great day of his wrath is come*; and therefore it is he who is described as *holy and true*.

But if it be replied to this; that creatures are sometimes called holy and true, we may farther add, that it is Christ to whom it is said, *Chap. xv. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord; and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest.* This I infer from what has been before consider'd, that it is he who obtains victory over, and pours forth his judgments on his church's enemies; and it is he whose praises are celebrated in the song of the Lamb, mention'd in the *Verse* immediately foregoing.

Having consider'd several divine perfections, as ascribed to our Saviour, and these so glorious, that nothing greater can be mention'd to set forth the glory of a divine Person; yet we may add hereunto, those glorious titles that are given him, with a design to excite in us adoring and admiring thoughts of him; amongst which we shall only mention some, which are either the same with, or are equivalent to those which are given to the Father; which they, who deny Christ's deity, cannot but own to be distinguishing characters of a divine Person, when so applied. Thus is the Father stiled, in *Heb. xiii. 20. The God of peace?* our Saviour is stiled, in *Isai. ix. 6. The Prince of peace*; and he is said, *Eph. ii. 14. to be our peace*; and as peace includes in it all the blessings that accompany salvation, Christ's being stiled the Author thereof, denotes him to be the Fountain of blessedness, which he could not be, were he not a divine Person.

Again, as God is called *a Sun*, and *a Shield*, *Psal. lxxxiv. 9.* so Christ is call'd, in *Mal. iv. 2. The Sun of righteousness*; and, in *Isai. xxxii. 2. An hiding place from the wind; a covert from the tem-*

pest; and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Again, is it said of God the Father, *Deut. xxx. 20. He is thy life, and the length of thy days?* our Saviour says, concerning himself, in *John xi. 25.* compared with *Chap. xiv. 6.* that he is *the life*; and, *Acts iii. 15.* he is called the *Prince of life*; and, in *Coloss. iii. 4. our life*. Again, is the Father called, in *Psal. lxxx. 1. The Shepherd of Israel?* Christ is called, in *Heb. xiii. 20. That great Shepherd of the sheep.*

Moreover, is God often described in scripture as a glorious King; as in *Zeph. iii. 15. The King of Israel, even the Lord in the midst of thee?* our Saviour is stiled, in *Isai. vi. 5. The King, the Lord of Hosts*; and, in *John i. 49. The King of Israel*; and, in *Rev. xix. 16. King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Again, is God stiled the *Hope of Israel*, *Jer. xiv. 8?* our Saviour seems to be so called by the Apostle, when he says, in *Acts xxviii. 20.* for the *Hope of Israel*, I am bound with this chain, that is, for Christ's sake, who is the object of his people's hope. However, whether he is intended thereby, or no, in that scripture, he is called elsewhere *our Hope*, *1 Tim. i. 1.* compared with *Coloss. i. 27.*

Moreover, is God the object of desire, so that there is *nothing in heaven or earth*, or within the whole compass of finite beings, that is to be desired *besides*, or in comparison with, *him*, as the Psalmist says, *Psal. lxxiii. 25?* our Saviour is called, in *Hag. ii. 7. The desire of all nations.* I might refer to many other glorious titles that are given to him in the *ii^d* and *iii^d* Chapters of the *Revelations*, in the epistles to the seven churches; every one of which is prefaced with such a character given of him, as is designed to strike them with an holy reverence, and esteem of him, as a divine Person: Thus concerning those proofs of Christ's deity, which are taken from the names, attributes, and titles, which are given to him; which leads us to consider,

III. The next head of argument taken from those works, which have been done by our Saviour, that are proper to God alone. Divine works argue a divine efficient, or that he has infinite power, and consequently that he is an infinite Person, or truly and properly God, who performs them. Now these works are of two sorts; either of nature and common providence, or of grace, to wit;

such as immediately respect our salvation; in all which, he acts beyond the power of a creature, and therefore appears to be a divine Person.

1. He appears to be so, from his having created all things. He that made the world, must be before it; and therefore since time began with the first creature, as has been before observed, it follows that he must be before time, that is, from eternity.

Again, he that created all things, must have a sovereign will, for whose pleasure they are and were created, Rev. iv. 11. And it follows from hence, that he has an undoubted right to all things, and that he might have annihilated them, had it been his pleasure; and also, that he has a right to dispose of them as he will, as the potter has power over his clay. All these things are consequent on the work of creation; therefore it is an undeniable argument, that he, who created all things, must be God.

It may also be observed, that to create, is to exert infinite power, or to act above the power of a creature, which, at best, is but finite: now whatever is more than finite, must be infinite; and consequently he who created all things, must exert infinite power, and that is certainly such as is truly divine.

We might farther consider, that there are many scriptures which appropriate creation to God, and, indeed, it cannot be otherwise; for to suppose that a creature gave being to it self, is to suppose him to be both a cause and an effect, and consequently to be, and not be, at the same time, to exist as a creator, and not to exist, as brought into being, which is a plain contradiction; and it is evident, that, in scripture, the creature is opposed to the creator: thus, in Rom. i. 25. it is said, *they worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed for ever*. And there are several scriptures that speak of creation, as a distinguishing evidence of divine glory: thus, in Isai. xl. 28. we have a magnificent description of God, taken more especially from this work, when he is called, *The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth*; and, in Chap. xlii. 5. *Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein*; in which, and many other scriptures of the like

nature, which might be refer'd to, it appears that creation is a work peculiar to God.

The next thing we are to prove is, that our Saviour created all things. There are many who think that this may be proved from the work of creation's being ascribed to more persons than one; and therefore when we read of *Creators*, in the plural number, as it is in the original, in Ecclef. xii. 1. *Remember thy Creator, or Creators*; and when God, in creating man, is represented as speaking after this manner, *Let us make man after our own image*, &c. this seems to imply, that there were more divine Persons engaged in this work than the Father.

I do not, indeed, lay so much stress on this argument, as many do, yet it is not wholly to be neglected; for, I confess, I cannot see any reason why there should be such a mode of expression used, were it not to signify this divine mystery, of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, to whom this work is ascribed.

Object. As for the objection, which some of the *Anti-trinitarians*, especially the *Socinians*, bring against it, that this mode of speaking, is such as is used in conformity to the custom of kings, who speak in the plural number.

Answer. To this it may be answer'd, that though kings do often speak in the plural number, yet this is only a modern way of speaking, implying, that whatever a king does, is by the advice of some of his subjects, who are his peculiar favourites, and who are also made use of to fulfil his will; but, nevertheless, this way of speaking is not so ancient as scripture-times, much less as *Moses's* time, or the beginning of the world, which he refers to, when God is represented as thus speaking. It is the custom of kings, in scripture, to speak in the singular number; and it is very absurd to pretend to explain any mode of speaking used in scripture, by customs of speech, not known till many ages after.

I am sensible, some think that mode of speaking used by *Ahasuerus*, Esth. i. 15. *What shall we do unto the queen Vashti, according to law?* is a proof that it was used in former ages. But the words may be render'd, *What is to be done*, according to law, &c. or what is it expedient for me to do? and therefore it doth not prove that kings used, in ancient times, to speak of themselves in the plural number; and consequently it cannot be argued, that when

The Socinian Account of CHRIST's making all Things. 171

when God is represented as speaking so in scripture, it is in compliance with any such custom. Besides, whenever he is represented as speaking, in scripture, in all other instances, excepting those that are supposed to be contain'd in our argument, he is always represented as speaking in the singular number; and therefore it seems still more probable, that this variation from his usual way of speaking, is not without some reason, and that hereby we are lead into this doctrine, that there are more divine Persons than one, that created all things.

But not to insist on this, since we have more plain proofs hereof in scripture; it evidently appears that Christ made all things, not only from what is said in *John* i. 3. that *all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made*; but, from *Coloss.* i. 16. *By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him*; in which he is not only said to be the Creator, but the end of all things, which is the same with what is said in *Prov.* xvi. 4. that *the Lord hath made all things for himself*.

This farther appears from *Psal.* cii. 25. *Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands*; which is expressly applied to Christ by the Apostle, in *Heb.* i. 10.

By these, and such-like scriptures, it evidently appears that Christ made all things. The Socinians, indeed, who are sensible that creation was an evident proof of divine power, and therefore that the Creator of all things must be God, labour very hard to prove that all those scriptures that ascribe this work to our Saviour, are to be taken in a metaphorical sense, and so signify nothing else but his being the Author of the gospel-state, which is a kind of new creation, peculiar to him; and that he did this as a prophet, revealing those doctrines which relate thereunto; and accordingly they take the sense of that scripture, in *John* i. 2, 3. which speaks of his being *in the beginning*, and that *all things were made by him*, as intending nothing else, but that he was in the beginning of the gospel, and that whatever was made, or ordain'd, to be a standard, and rule of faith, was by him; and that, in the discharge of this work, he was to restore decay'd

religion, and to correct several mistaken notions, which the *Jews* had entertain'd concerning the moral law, to add some new precepts to it, and give directions concerning that mode of worship, which should be observed in the church for the future. This is all they suppose to be intended by that work, which is ascribed to Christ, as a Creator; whereas, in this scripture, it is plainly said, that there was nothing in the whole frame of nature, nothing that was an effect of power made without him. And there is another scripture, which cannot, with any colour of reason, be understood in that sense, viz. in *Coloss.* i. 16. *By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible*, where the Apostle speaks of the creation of angels and men, as well as all other things; now, certainly, Christ did not come into the world to rectify any mistakes, or restore decay'd religion among the angels, therefore the Apostle here plainly proves that our Saviour created all things.

But since this opinion of the Socinians is now almost universally exploded by the *Anti-trinitarians*, we have no occasion to add any thing farther in opposition to it; but shall proceed to consider what the *Arians* say concerning Christ's creating all things. These allow that the work of creation is ascribed to him; but they deny that this argues him to be God in the same sense as the Father is. The account which they give thereof is, that God, to wit, the Father, created all things by the Son, as an instrument, created by him, immediately, for that purpose; so that the Son was an inferior, or second cause of the production of all things; and therefore that it cannot, from thence, be concluded that he is God, equal with the Father.

What I would humbly offer, in opposition hereunto, is,

1. That, in this account of creation, there is not a just difference put between the natural and supernatural production of things, of which the latter only can be called creation; therefore, if these two be confounded, the distinguishing character of a Creator is set aside, and consequently the glory arising from hence cannot be appropriated to God; nor is that infinite perfection, that is display'd therein, duly consider'd, but, according to this scheme, or method of reasoning, a creature may be a Creator, and a Creator a creature; nor can the eternal power
and

172 CHRIST *no Instrument to the Father in Creation.*

and Godhead, of the divine Being, be demonstrated by the things that are *made*, or created, as the Apostle says they are, in *Rom. i. 20.*

2. From that first mistake arises another, namely, that because, in natural productions, that which was created by God, may be render'd subservient to the production of other things; in which respect it may be term'd an instrument, made use of by a superior cause, and may have an energy, or method of acting, peculiar to it self, whereby it produces effects, according to the course and laws of nature, fixed by God, the first cause of all things; therefore they suppose, though without sufficient ground, that God might create all things by an instrument, or second cause thereof, as they conclude he did by the Son.

3. Notwithstanding we must assert, that creation being a supernatural production of things, what has been said concerning natural production, is not applicable to it; therefore,

4. Though things may be produced in a natural way, by second causes, whose powers are limited, and subjected, as aforesaid, to the laws of nature, yet supernatural effects cannot be produced by any thing short of infinite power; therefore, since creation is a supernatural work, it must be concluded to be a work of infinite power.

5. It follows, from hence, that it is not agreeable to the *Idea* of creation, or the producing all things out of nothing, for God to make use of an instrument. That this may appear, let it be consider'd, that whatever instrument is made use of, it must be either finite or infinite. An infinite instrument cannot be made use of, for then there would be two infinities, one superior, the other inferior. Nor can a finite one be made use of, for that, according to our last *Proposition*, cannot produce any supernatural effect, as creation is supposed to be, which requires infinite power, and that cannot be exerted by a finite *Medium*, therefore no such instrument can be used. Moreover, if it requires infinite power to create all things, this power, in its method of acting, would be limited, by the instrument it makes use of; for whatever power a superior cause has in himself, the effect produced, by an instrument, will be in proportion to the weakness thereof. This some illustrate by the similitude of a giant's making use of a straw, or a reed, in striking a blow, in which the

weakness of the instrument renders the power of the person that uses it insignificant. Thus if God the Father should make use of the Son, in the creation of all things, the power that is exerted by him therein, can be no other than finite; but that is not sufficient for the production of things supernatural, which require infinite power. To this we may add,

6. That the creation of all things is ascribed to the sovereignty of the divine will; accordingly the Psalmist describing it, in *Psal. xxxiii. 9.* says, *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;* so when God, in *Gen. i. 3.* said, *Let there be light, and there was light;* and when we read of the other parts of the creation, as produced by his almighty word, it implies that they were produced by an act of his will. Now it seems impossible, from the nature of the thing, that an instrument should be made use of in an act of willing, any more than in an act of understanding.

7. No cause can reasonably be assign'd why God should make use of an instrument in the production of all things; for certainly he that, by his immediate power, produced the instrument, might without any difficulty, or absurdity, attending the supposition, have created all things immediately without one. And we must farther suppose, that if there were nothing in the nature of things, which required him to make use of an instrument, he would not, by making use of one, to wit, the Son, administer occasion to him, to assume so great a branch of his own glory, namely, that of being the Creator of the ends of the earth; or for his being, as the result thereof, worshipped as a divine Person, supposing him to have a right to divine worship, for no other reason.

Object. 1. Though no one supposes that God stood in need of an instrument, or could not have created all things without it, yet we must conclude that he did not, because the scripture speaks of the Father's creating all things by the Son; and when one person is said to do any thing by another, it implies, that he makes use of him, as an instrument therein.

Ans. This seems to be the only foundation on which this doctrine is built. But there is no necessity of understanding the words in this sense, especially if we consider that all effects are produced by the power of God; and this power, supposing the Son to be a divine Person

Person, (which we have endeavour'd, by other arguments, to prove) must belong to him; and the Father and the Son being united, in the same Godhead, one cannot act without the other; therefore whatever is said to be done by the Father, may, in this sense, be said to be done by the Son; for though the Persons are distinct, the power exerted is the same.

Thus a learned writerⁿ accounts for this matter, when he says, that "The Son is of the same nature and substance with the Father; so nearly allied, so closely united, that nothing could be the work of one, without being, at the same time, the work of both: Hence it was, that the Son was Joint-creator with the Father, that all things were made by him, and nothing without him; it was not possible for them either to act, or to exist separately; and therefore it is that the work of creation is, in scripture, attributed to both." This is a very safe as well as a just way of reasoning, consistent with, and founded on the doctrine of the Father and Son's being united in the same Godhead, though distinct Persons; and therefore it is agreeable to the sense of those scriptures, which attribute this work to the Son, in the same sense, as when 'tis attributed to the Father.

But I am sensible that the *Arians* will reply to it; that this does not sufficiently account for that subordination in acting, that seems to be implied in the sense of those scriptures, in which the Father is said to have created all things by the Son; therefore I shall take leave to speak more particularly to those texts that treat of this matter, where the same mode of speaking is used; and though there are several scriptures that represent the Son as a Creator, or consider all things, as being made by him, as well as the Father, or as a Joint-creator with him; yet there are but two places in the New Testament, in which the Father is said to have created all things by the Son, namely, *Eph. iii. 9.* in which it is said, that God, that is, the Father, created all things by Jesus Christ; and the other is in *Heb. i. 2.* where 'tis said, by whom also he made the worlds.

We have already consider'd the absurdity of the *Socinian* way of expounding those other scriptures, that speak of

Christ as a Creator, in which he is not said to act in subserviency to, but co-ordinately with the Father; but inasmuch as God the Father is, in these scriptures, said to create all things by Jesus Christ, I shall humbly offer it, as my opinion, that though the other scriptures, in which Christ is set forth as a Creator, have no reference to him as Mediator, nor to the new creation, yet this seems to be the more probable sense of both these scriptures.

As for the former of them, though some suppose that it is needless to give the sense of it, since the words, by Jesus Christ, are wanting in some ancient copies of scripture, as well as in the vulgar *Latin* and *Syriac Versions*: yet, since there are many copies that have it, we will suppose it to be genuine; and that we may account for the sense of it, we may observe that the Apostle makes use of the word *create* three times in this epistle; we find it, in *Chap. ii. 10.* and *iv. 24.* in both which places it is taken for the new creation, which is brought about by Christ, as Mediator; and, I humbly conceive, that it may be taken so, in this *Verse*, which we are now considering; and therefore this is a part of that mystery, of which the Apostle speaks in the foregoing words, *that was hid in God*; and this sense seems not to be excluded, by those who suppose, that in other respects, it has some reference to the first creation of all things.

As for the other scripture, by whom also he made the worlds, *δι' ἧς τῆς αἰῶνος ἐποίησεν*, that is, by whom he made, instituted, or ordain'd, the various dispensations, which the church was under, either before or since his incarnation; this was certainly done by him as Mediator; and herein he acted in subserviency to the Father, as well as in all other works performed by him, as having this character. I would not be too peremptory in determining this to be the sense of the text, inasmuch as the Apostle speaks of his upholding all things, in the following *Verse*, which is well put after this account of his having created them: I am also sensible that the word which we translate *Worlds*, is used in *Heb. xi. 3.* to signify the world that was at first created, in the most proper sense of the word *Creation*, when the Apostle says, that, through faith, we understand that the worlds, *τῆς αἰῶνος*,

ⁿ Dr. Waterland, Serm. III. in defence of the divinity of Christ, Pag. 106.

^o Vid. Bez. in loc. Unus Deus, omnes populos condidit, sic etiam nunc omnes ad se vocat; condidit autem per Christum, sic per Christum instaurat.

174 *How Men in working Miracles were Instruments.*

were framed by the word of God, &c. But yet when I find, that in many other places of the New Testament, where the word is used, it is taken in the sense but now given^p, I cannot but conclude it the more probable sense of the text; but that which most of all determines me to acquiesce in it, is, because the subserviency of the Son to the Father in this work is most agreeable to it.

If it be objected, that this sense of the text coincides with that which is given of it by *Socinus*, and his followers, which we before mentioned and opposed.

To this I answer, that the sense I have given of it, is very foreign to theirs, who endeavour thereby to evade the force of the argument brought from it, to prove our Saviour's deity; whereas we only exchange one argument, for the proof thereof, for another; for it seems to me to be as great an evidence, that he is a divine Person, when consider'd as the Author and Founder of the church, in all the ages thereof; or the rock on which it is built, as when he is called, as he is, in many other scriptures, the Creator of the world, if he be the supreme Head, Lord, and Law-giver to his church, in all the ages thereof; if the faith and hope of all that shall be saved, is founded upon him, as the great Mediator, Redeemer, and Sovereign thereof, then certainly he is God, equal with the Father.

Object. 2. To what has been before suggested, upon which the chief stress of our reasoning depends, viz. that a finite creature cannot be an instrument in supernatural productions, it is objected, that miracles are supernatural productions; but these have been wrought by men, as instruments in the hand of God; therefore the creation of all things may as well be supposed to have been performed by the Son, as an instrument made use of to this end by the Father.

Answer. That miracles are supernatural productions, no one denies; and it follows from hence, that they are either a species of creation, or equivalent to it; therefore if it be allowed that a creature can have power communicated to him to work them, and therein may be said to be an instrument made use of by God, then we cannot reasonably deny that God the Father might use the Son as an instrument in creating all things: but we

must take leave to deny that any, who are said to have wrought miracles, have had infinite power communicated to them for that purpose; therefore they are not properly instruments in the hand of God, to produce supernatural effects; but all that they have done therein, was only by addressing themselves to God, that he would put forth his immediate power in working the miracle; and in giving the people, for whose sake it was to be wrought, occasion to expect it; and afterwards improving it for their farther conviction. It is true, miracles are oftentimes said to have been wrought by men; but, I humbly conceive, nothing more than this is intended thereby; which, that it may appear, we may observe, that sometimes they who have wrought them, have not made use of any action herein, but only given the people ground to expect the divine interposure: thus, immediately before the earth swallowed up *Korah* and his company, *Moses* gave the people to expect this miraculous event, *Numb. xvi. 28—30.* *And Moses said, Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me. If these men die the common death of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, then shall ye know that these men have provoked the Lord;* and, as soon as he had spoken the words, the ground clave asunder, and swallowed them up. This might be reckon'd among the miracles wrought by *Moses*; though all that he did was only what tended to raise the people's expectation, that such an extraordinary event should immediately happen. Again, at other times, when a miracle has been wrought, we read of nothing done, but only a word spoken to signify that God would work it: thus when the captain, with his fifty men, was sent, by the King of *Israel*, to the prophet *Elijah*, to command him to come to him, the prophet uses this mode of speaking, *2 Kings i. 12.* *If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty;* which immediately happen'd accordingly.

At other times, when miracles have been wrought, the Person who, in the sense but now mentioned, is said to work them, has made use of some external and visible sign, which was either an ordinance for his own faith, if no one was present

^p See *Matt. xii. 32.* *1 Cor. x. 11.* *Eph. i. 21.* and *Chap. ii. 7.* *Heb. vi. 5.* and *Chap. ix. 26.* the Apostle speaking of the foundation of the world, meaning the first creation, uses the word *κόσμος*; but when, in the following words, he speaks of Christ's appearing in the end of the world, to put away sin, &c. he uses the words *τὸν αἰῶνα*.

but himself; as when the prophet *Elisha* smote the waters of *Jordan* with *Elijah's* mantle, and said, *2 Kings ii. 14. Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* or else the sign, being given by divine direction, was an ordinance for the faith of the people present, whose conviction was intended thereby; not that they should suppose that the action used had any tendency to produce the miracle: but it was only designed to raise their expectation, that God would work it by his immediate power; as when *Moses* was commanded, in *Exod. xiv. 16. to lift up his rod, and stretch out his hand over the sea, and divide it, that Israel might pass through;* or, in *Chap. xvii. 6. to smite the rock,* whereupon God caused water to come out of it; and in several other actions, which he used, by divine direction, when other miracles were wrought; in which respect, though he was said, in a less proper way of speaking, to have wrought them, yet he was no more than a moral instrument herein, and therefore the divine power was not communicated to, or exerted by him; and if creatures have been instruments in working miracles in no other sense than this, it cannot be infer'd from hence that Christ might be made use of by the Father, as an instrument in creating the world: A moral instrument he could not be; for there was no doctrine contested, no truth to be confirmed thereby, no subjects present to expect a divine interposition; and, indeed, none ever supposed that the Son of God was an instrument in this sense; therefore if no one ever was an instrument in any other, nor could be, from the nature of the thing, as has been already proved, then the force of the argument, which we have laid down to prove it, is not, in the least weaken'd by this objection.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove the divinity of Christ from the work of creation.

2. We shall proceed to consider how our Saviour's deity appears, from those works of providence, which are daily perform'd by him. Providence is as much a divine work, and contains as glorious a display of the divine perfections, as creation; and this is twofold, *viz.* preserving and governing. With respect to the former of these, some divines have asserted, that 'tis, as it were, a continued creation, not formally so; but as the one produces a creature, the other pre-

vents its sinking into nothing; and because it is, in all respects, dependent on the power of God, and as much so, for the continuance of its being, as it was for its being brought into being; therefore conserving providence is an evidence of the divine power of him who sustains all things.

Now that this glory belongs to our Saviour, is plain, from scripture, which speaks of him, in *Heb. i. 3. as upholding all things by the word of his power;* and, in *Coloss. i. 17. 'tis said, by him all things consist:* both these scriptures respect this branch of divine providence, namely, his preserving all things in being; and this is certainly more than can be said of any creature: and 'tis not pretended that herein he acts as the Father's instrument, even by those who suppose that he was so, in the creation of all things, inasmuch as scripture does not speak of God's upholding all things by him, but of Christ's upholding them by his own, that is, the divine power; so that we have as plain a proof of his deity, from his upholding providence, as there is of the being of a God, which is evidently infer'd from it.

As to the other branch of providence, respecting the government of the world in general, or of the church in particular, this is also ascribed to Christ, and thereby his Godhead is farther proved; whatever degree of limited dominion may be said to belong to creatures, yet universal dominion belongs only to God; and this is assigned, as one ground and reason of his right to divine honour; therefore 'tis said, in *Job xxv. 2. Dominion and fear are with him,* that is, there is a holy reverence due to him, as the supream Lord and Governor of the world; and, in *Psal. lxvii. 4. when 'tis said concerning the great God, that he shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,* this is consider'd as the foundation of universal joy, *O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy;* and of praise, *Ver. 5. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee;* and, in *Psal. xxii. 28. when 'tis said, the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the Governor among the nations;* this is assign'd, as the reason of their worshipping him, *Ver. 27. All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee;* this therefore is, undoubtedly, a branch of the divine glory; so that if we can prove that universal dominion belongs to Christ, or that

176 CHRIST *the Governor of the World and Church.*

That he is the Governor of the world, and of the church therein, this will plainly evince his deity.

1. Let us consider him as the Governor of the world. This seems to be the meaning of several expressions of scripture, in which royal dignity is ascribed to him; and he is represented as sitting upon a throne, and his *throne to be for ever and ever*, Psal. xlv. 6. and he infinitely greater than all the kings of the earth; upon which account, he is called, in Rev. i. 5. *The Prince of the kings of the earth*; and they are commanded to testify their subjection to him, and all are represented as blessed that *put their trust in him*, Psal. ii. 12. And as his kingdom is consider'd, in John xviii. 36. as *not being of this world*, and the honours due to him, such as are divine, this farther proves his deity.

Moreover, his universal dominion, and consequently his Godhead, is evinced by that glorious character, which we have before consider'd^a, as belonging to him, namely, the Lord of Hosts, as the prophet *Isaiab* says, speaking of the vision which he had of his glory, in Chap. vi. 5. *Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts*, as denoting his sovereignty over all the Hosts of heaven, and all creatures in this lower world, as he governs them, and makes one thing subservient to another, and all this is done to set forth his own glory.

2. This will farther appear, if we consider him as the Governor of his church; in this he has access to the souls of men, working in them those graces, which are the effects of almighty power, which he does, when they are effectually called; and the work of sanctification, which is consequent hereupon, is carried on till it is perfected. We shall have occasion, under some following *Answers*^r, to prove that these are divine and supernatural works; the more full and particular proof whereof, we shall reserve to its proper place, and only observe, at present, that they are spoken of as such in scripture, and ascribed to the exceeding greatness of the power of God, no less than that *which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*, Eph. i. 18—20. and elsewhere they are called a *new creation*, Chap. ii. 1. *a quickening or resurrection, a breaking the rock in pieces, taking away the heart of stone, giving a heart of flesh, or a new heart*^t; which expressions would never have been

used, had not the work been divine and supernatural; therefore it follows from hence, that since Christ is the Author of this internal work, he is a divine Person: now that he is so, is obvious, from many places in the New Testament; as when he is stiled, in Heb. xii. 2. *The Author and Finisher of our faith*; and when the Apostle, in 1 Tim. i. 14. speaks of *faith and love abounding, which is in Christ Jesus*, he speaks, at the same time, of the *grace of our Lord abounding*, as the spring and fountain thereof; and when the Apostles, in Luke xvii. 5. desire him to *increase their faith*, not in an objective way, as affording some greater foundation for it, but subjectively, by an internal work, exciting and promoting the principle thereof, which was before implanted in them; and so causing all those graces, that accompany it, to abound, as the effects of his divine power.

We might farther consider Christ's spiritual government, as extended to his church, collectively consider'd, which is exposed to many dangers and difficulties, and meets with much opposition from its enemies, who attempt its ruin, but in vain, because it is the object of the divine care, kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; for which reason, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Now this is, in a peculiar manner the work of Christ; he is the rock on which it is built; and his presence, in the midst of his people, is not only their glory, but their safety; which it would not be, if he were no more than a creature. We might also consider the subserviency of the various dispensations of providence in the world to their good, as he is *Head over all things to the church*, Eph. i. 22. which could not answer that valuable end, had he not been a divine Person.

We might farther consider how the divine glory of Christ will be demonstrated, in his second coming to compleat the work of salvation, begun in this world. To prepare a way for this, there will be an universal resurrection of the dead, which will be no less an effect of almighty power, than the creation of all things was at first. I need not therefore say any thing farther to prove this to be a divine work; we need only prove that this general resurrection shall be perform'd by Christ: this might be proved from several scriptures; in one whereof he expressly asserts it himself, in words very plain and particular, viz. John vi. 38.

^a See Pag. 139.

^r See Quest. LXVII. and LXXV.

^t Jer. xxiii. 29. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice; and shall come forth, &c. Moreover; when, at the same time, he is represented as coming in the clouds, with power and great glory, in his own glory, as well as *that of his Father, and of the holy angels*, in *Luke ix. 26.* the most natural sense of that text seems to be this; that his divine glory, which is called *his own*, which was comparatively hid from his people, while he was here on earth, shall eminently be demonstrated in his second coming, and also that mediatorial glory, which he has received from the Father, as what he had a right to, on his having accomplished the work of redemption, which he came into the world about; and then there is the glory of his retinue, as appearing with all his holy angels; which bears some resemblance to that expression, whereby the majesty of God is set forth upon another occasion, namely, as appearing on mount *Sinai*, to give the law, when it is said, in *Deut. xxxiii. 2.* *The Lord came with ten thousands of saints.*

And to this we may add, that the work, which he shall, immediately after this, be engaged in, to wit, that of judging the world in righteousness, plainly proves his deity, since none but a divine Person can judge the secrets of all men, bring to light every thing that has been done, from the beginning, to the end of time: and this is to be done in that day; for it is said, in *Eccl. xii. 14.* *That God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* This is a farther improvement of that argument, before laid down, to prove his divinity from his omniscience; if his judgment must be, as the Apostle says, in *Rom. ii. 2.* *according to truth*, and consequently performed with the greatest impartiality, as well as an exquisite knowledge, or discerning of the cause, without which it could not be said, that *the Judge of all the earth does right*, (as he certainly will) in *Gen. xviii. 25.* and if rewards shall be proportion'd to every work done, so that every one shall receive, as the Apostle says, in *2 Cor. v. 10.* *according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad*; and if persons are to be rewarded, or punished, for all the secret springs of action, which must be reckon'd either good or bad, according to what they produce, as well as the actions themselves; and if this respects not particular persons only, but all

men, who have lived, or shall live, from the beginning to the end of the world; it evidently proves, that he, to whom this glorious work is ascribed, must be a divine Person.

And to this we may add, that the manner of his appearing with the terror, as well as the majesty of a Judge, being such as shall strike his enemies with the utmost horror and confusion, is a farther proof of this matter. This is represented in a lively manner, in *Rev. vi. 15-17.* in which 'tis said, *the kings of the earth, and the great men, those who once render'd themselves formidable to their subjects, shall desire to hide themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the rocks and to the mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* And,

Lastly, He will not only pronounce the sentence, but execute it, and that with respect to his saints and subjects; and his enemies: As to the former of these, he will not only command them to come, and possess the kingdom prepared for them, but the blessedness which he will confer upon them, pursuant thereunto, is called the beatifick vision, in *1 John iii. 2.* *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*; and the happiness of heaven is described in such a way, as plainly proves our Saviour to be the Fountain thereof, and consequently a divine Person; for it is represented as a state, in which they will behold his glory, *John xvii. 24.* whereas certainly the beholding the glory of the most exalted creature, falls infinitely short of this ingredient in the heavenly blessedness.

And, on the other hand, the immediate impressions of the wrath of God on the consciences of his enemies, or the power of his anger, which shall render them eternally miserable, when banished from his presence, proves him to be a divine Person, inasmuch as the highest degree of misery consists in a separation, or departure from him, which it could not do, if he were not the Fountain of blessedness; nor could the punishment of sinners be proportion'd to their crimes, if it were not to be inflicted by the glory of his power; the Apostle joins both these together, in *2 Thess. i. 9.* though some understand the words, as implying, that their punishment proceeds from his immediate presence, in the display of the

178 *The Subserviency of CHRIST's Kingdom to the Father.*

greatness of his power, as a sin-revenging Judge; in either of which senses, it argues him to be a divine Person. And that it is our Saviour who is spoken of, is evident, from the foregoing and following *Verses*; it is he who shall appear in *flaming fire*, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel; and it is he that shall *come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*; so that we have a very plain proof of his deity, from the exercise of his government, either in this, or the other world.

Having endeavour'd to prove the divinity of Christ, from his works of creation and providence, and, under the former of these, offer'd some things in answer to the methods taken by the *Soci-nians*, and especially the *Arians*, in accounting for the sense of those scriptures that speak of the Father's creating all things by the Son; it is necessary for us now to consider the most material objections, brought by the *Anti-trinitarians* in general, against what has been said in defence of this doctrine, taken from the works of common and special providence, as ascribed to him, and, in particular, from the administration of his kingdom of grace; it is therefore objected,

Object. 1. That his kingdom, and power of acting, in the administration of the affairs relating thereunto, is wholly derived from the Father: thus he says, in *Luke xxii. 29. I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*; and, in *Matt. xi. 27. All things are deliver'd unto me of my Father*; and, in *Psal. ii. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*. And whatever he does in managing the affairs thereof, is by the Father's commission and appointment: thus, in *John v. 36. he speaks of the works which he was to perform, as those which the Father had given him to finish*; and as for his power of executing judgment, which is one of the greatest glories of his kingly government, this is derived from the Father, in *John v. 22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son*; and, in *Acts xvii. 31. 'tis said, that he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordain'd*, meaning our Saviour; and when he speaks, in *Rev. ii. 27. of his ruling his enemies with a rod of iron, and breaking them to shivers, as the vessels of a potter*, he adds, that this *he received of his Father*; from whence they argue;

that since he received his dominion, or right to govern the world and the church, from the Father, therefore he cannot be God equal with the Father. As we say, in opposition to their scheme of doctrine, that a derived deity, such as they suppose him to be, cannot be the same with that which the Father has; so they alledge this, by way of reprisal, against the argument we have but now insisted on, that a derived dominion cannot be made use of as a *Medium* to prove him that has it to be a divine Person, in the same sense in which we maintain him to be.

2. In all his works, and particularly in the administration of the affairs of his kingdom, he acts for the Father's glory, and not his own; whereas a divine Person cannot act for any other end than for his own glory: this therefore rather disproves, than evinces, his proper deity; as when he says, in *John viii. 49. I honour my Father*; and, in *Chap. v. 30. he says, I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me*. He also speaks of the Father's giving him a commandment to do what he did; as in *John xii. 49. I have not spoken of my self, but the Father which sent me; he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak*; and, in *Chap. xiv. 31. As the Father gave me commandment, so I do*; and, in *Chap. xv. 10. he speaks of his having kept his Father's commandment, and, pursuant hereunto, abiding in his love*; from whence they argue, that he who is obliged to fulfil a commandment, or who acts in obedience to the Father, is properly a subject, or a servant, and therefore cannot be God in the same sense as the Father, who gave this commandment, is.

3. They add, that in the government of his church, and the world, in subserviency thereunto, he acts, in the Father's name, as his Deputy and Vicegerent; as in *John x. 25. The works that I do, in my Father's name, they bear witness of me*; and accordingly his works are called the Father's, in *Ver. 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*; and these works are said to be done *from the Father*, *Ver. 32. Many good works have I shewed you from my Father*; and, as the consequence of all this, he acknowledges, as he ought to do, in *John xiv. 28. that the Father is greater than him*. How then can he be a divine Person, in the sense in which we have proved him to be, when there is a God above him, in whose name he acts in all he does?

4. They

4. They farther argue, that he was made both Lord and Christ, and that by the Father, as it is expressly said, in Acts ii. 36.

5. They farther argue, that the donatives of his kingdom, or those honours which are bestowed on his subjects, are not his to give, but the Father's; as it is said, in Matt. xx. 23. *To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

6. This kingdom which he received from the Father, and thus administers in subserviency to him, is, in the end, to be resign'd, or deliver'd up: thus in 1 Cor. xv. 24. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have deliver'd up the kingdom to God, even the Father; and, in Ver. 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all;* and accordingly he shall lay aside those divine honours which he now has, or cease to perform those works, which give him a right to claim them. These are the strongest arguments, of any, that are brought by the *Anti-trinitarians* against our Saviour's proper deity; and, indeed, as though they had little else to object, there is scarce an argument to disprove it, but what is supported in this method of reasoning, which they think to be altogether unanswerable, (and there are many more scriptures, which might have been brought to the same purpose) therefore it is necessary that we should consider what may be replied to it.

The sum of what has been objected, as thus branched out into several particulars, is, that since Christ is represented as below the Father, or inferior to him, he cannot be equal with him, for that is no other than a contradiction.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that though the scripture speaks of our Saviour, as receiving a commission from the Father, and acting in subserviency to him; yet let it be consider'd, that this does not respect the inferiority of his divine nature, but the subserviency of what is done by him, as Mediator, to the glory of the Father, as this character and office was received from him. And, indeed, whenever the Son is represented, as engaged in the great work of redemption, or in any thing tending thereunto, or in any work consequent thereupon, whereby what was before purchased is said to be applied by him, this has a peculiar re-

ference to him, as Mediator, therefore let us consider,

1. That nothing is more common, in scripture, than for him to be represented as Mediator, especially in all those things that concern the spiritual advantages, or salvation of his church, which is the principal thing to be consider'd in his government; and in this sense we are to understand those scriptures, which have been brought to support the objection: and 'tis plain, that our Saviour generally speaks of himself under this character, which is included in his being the Messiah, or Christ, which is the main thing that he designed to evince by his doctrine and his miracles; therefore, if we duly consider the import of this character, it will not only give light to the understanding such-like scriptures, but sufficiently answer the objection against his deity taken from them.

Our adversaries will not deny that Christ is represented as a Mediator; but they widely differ from us, when they take occasion to explain what they intend thereby: sometimes they seem to mean nothing else by it, but a middle, being betwixt God and the creature; and therefore the work, perform'd by him as such, is not what requires him to be, in the most proper sense, a divine Person, and consequently whatever inferiority to the Father is contained in this character, they conclude that this respects his deity; whereas we distinguish between the subserviency of the work, perform'd by him, as Mediator, to the glory of God the Father, together with the subjection, or real inferiority of the human nature, in which he perform'd it to the Father, and the inferiority of his divine nature; the former we allow; the latter we deny.

2. When we speak of him as Mediator, we always suppose him to be God and Man, in one Person; and that these two natures, though infinitely distinct, are not to be separated. As God, without the consideration of a human nature united to his divine Person, he would be too high to sustain the character, or to perform the work of a servant, and, as such, to yield that obedience, which was incumbent on him, as Mediator; and, on the other hand, to be a meer man, is too low, and would be altogether inconsistent with that infinite value and dignity, that was to be put on the work which he was to perform; therefore it was necessary that he should have two distinct natures, a divine and a human, or that he should be

be God incarnate. This will be more particularly consider'd under some following *Answers* ; and therefore we shall reserve the proof hereof for its proper place, and there consider the distinct properties of each nature ; and all that we shall observe at present is, that the evangelist *John*, in whose gospel our Saviour is often described, as inferior to the Father, as well as equal with him, which is agreeable to his mediatorial character, lays down this, as a kind of preface, designing hereby to lead us into the knowledge of such-like expressions, when he says, in *John* i. 14. *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us* ; which is all the proof we shall give of it at present.

3. It follows from hence, that several things may be truly spoken concerning, or applied to him, which are infinitely opposite to one another, and yet be both true in different respects, namely, that he has almighty power in one respect, as to what concerns his deity ; and yet that he is weak, finite, and dependent in another, as to what respects his humanity. In one nature, he is God equal with the Father, and so receives nothing from him, is not dependent on him, nor under any obligation to yield obedience ; in this nature, he is the object of worship, as all worship terminates on that deity, which is common to all the Persons in the Godhead : But, in the other nature, he worships, receives all from, and refers all to the glory of the Father ; therefore,

4. Those scriptures which speak of him as receiving a kingdom, doing all things from, or in obedience to the Father, or in his name, and for his glory, and as inferior to, and dependent on him, are not only applied to him, as Mediator, but they have a particular respect to his human nature ; so that all that can be infer'd from such modes of speaking, as those above-mentioned, as so many objections against the doctrine which we are defending, is, that he who is God is also Man, and consequently has those things predicated of him, as such which are proper to a nature infinitely below, though inseparably united with his divine.

Moreover, whereas 'tis said, that *the Father has committed all judgment to the Son*, or that *he judgeth the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordain'd* ; all that can be infer'd from

hence is, that so far as this work is perform'd by him, in his human nature, which will be render'd visible to the whole world at the day of judgment, 'tis an instance of the highest favour and glory confer'd upon this nature, or upon God-man Mediator, as man : but whereas he is elsewhere described, as having a right to judge the world, as God ; and as having those infinite perfections, whereby he is fit to do it, these are the same that belong to the Father, and therefore not derived from him.

Again, when, in another scripture, before refer'd to, 'tis said, that *God hath made him both Lord and Christ*, 'tis not there said, that the Father hath made him God, or given him any branch of the divine glory ; but it signifies, the unction that he received from the Father, to be the King, Head, and Lord of his church ; which, so far as this is an act of grace, or connotes his dependence on the Father herein, it has an immediate respect to him, in his human nature, in which, as well as in his divine nature, this dominion is exercised ; whereas his sovereignty, and universal dominion over the church and the world, or those divine perfections, which render him, in all respects, fit to govern it ; they belong, more especially, to the Mediator, as God, and are the same as when they are applied to the Father.

Moreover, when he says, *I seek not my own will, but the Father's, that sent me* ; and elsewhere, *Not my will, but thine, be done* ; it argues that he had a human will, distinct from his divine, in which he expresses that subjection to the Father, which becomes a creature ; this is plainly refer'd to him as man : so, on the other hand, when he says, speaking of himself co-ordinately with the Father, *As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will* ; this, though spoken of him as Mediator, has a peculiar reference to his divine nature.

Again, when he says, in another scripture, *The Father is greater than I*, that is applied to him as man ; whereas elsewhere, in *John* x. 30. when he says, *I and my Father are one*, that is spoken of him as God, having the same nature with the Father ; so that if we suppose our Saviour to be God and Man, as he is plainly proved to be, from scripture, then it follows, that whatever is said con-

Religious Worship given to CHRIST proves his Deity. 181

cerning him, as importing his right to divine honour on the one hand, or his disclaiming it on the other; these are both true, when we consider him in these different natures.

Thus we are to understand those scriptures, that speak of the real inferiority of the Son to the Father: but when; in other places, nothing is intended but the subserviency of what is done by the Son, as Mediator, or its tendency to set forth the Father's glory, this may be applicable to those divine works; which the Mediator performs; and so we may distinguish between the subserviency of the divine actions to the Father's glory, and the inferiority of one divine Person to another; the former may be asserted without detracting from his proper deity, while the latter is denied, as inconsistent with it.

Thus we have endeavour'd to explain those scriptures, which are refer'd to by the *Arians*, to overthrow our Saviour's divinity; and, by the same method of explication, I humbly conceive, all others, that can be brought to that purpose; may be understood. I have pass'd over that scripture, indeed, which respects *Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father*, and being subject to him, which it might have been expected that I should have endeavour'd to explain; but I chuse rather to refer the consideration thereof to its proper place, when we speak concerning Christ's kingly office, and his being exalted in the execution thereof.

IV. The next argument to prove the divinity of Christ, is taken from his being the object of religious worship, which is a practical owning of him to be a divine Person, when there is an agreement between our words and actions, in both which we acknowledge him to have the perfections of the divine nature. This argument is so strong and conclusive, that it is very difficult to evade the force thereof; and, indeed, it affects the very essentials of religion. Now, that we may herein proceed with greater plainness, we shall,

1. Consider what we are to understand by worship in general, and by religious worship in particular. I am very sensible that the *Anti-trinitarians* understand the word in a sense very different from what we do, as taking it in a limited sense, for our expressing some degree of humility, or reverence, to a person, whom we acknowledge, in some respect, to be our superior; but whatever external

signs of reverence, or words, we use, as expressive of our regard to him, who is the object thereof; this, when applied to our Saviour, is no more than what they suppose to be due to a person below the Father. Therefore, that we may not mistake the meaning of the word, let it be consider'd; that worship is either civil or religious; the former contains in it that honour and respect which is given to superiors, which is sometimes expressed by bowing, or falling down, before them, or some other marks of humility, which their advanced station in the world requires: Tho' this is seldom called worshipping them; and it is always distinguished from religious worship, even when the same gestures are used therein. It is true, there is one scripture, in which the same word is applied to both, in 1 Chron. xxix. 20. where it is said, *All the congregation bowed down their heads; and worshipped the Lord and the king*, that is, they paid civil respect, accompanied with those actions that are expressive of humility, and that honour that was due to *David*, but their worship given to God was divine or religious. This is the only sense in which we understand *worship* in this argument, and it includes in it adoration and invocation. In the former, we ascribe infinite perfection unto God, either directly, or by consequence; an instance whereof we have in 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all; and, in Deut. xxxii. 3. in which we are said to ascribe greatness unto him; and, in Rom. i. 21. to glorify him as God, or give unto him the glory due unto his name, Psal. xxix. 2.*

Invocation is that wherein we glorify God, as the Fountain of blessedness, when we ask those things from him, which none but a God can give, which is sometimes called *seeking the Lord*, Psal. cv. 4. or *calling upon him*, Psal. l. 15. And this includes in it all those duties which we perform, in which we consider him as a God of infinite perfection, and our selves dependent on him, and desirous to receive all those blessings from him, which we stand in need of; and particularly faith,

A a a in

in the various acts thereof, is a branch of religious worship, as connoting its object to be a divine Person, as also supreme love, and universal obedience, and, indeed, it contains in it the whole of religion, in which we have a due regard to that infinite distance that there is between him and the best of creatures, and religious worship is no where taken in a lower sense than this in scripture.

2. Religious worship, as thus described, is to be given to none but a divine Person, according to our Saviour's words, in *Matt. iv. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* This is evident, from the *Idea* we have of religion in general, which is a giving that glory, or ascribing those perfections to God, which belong to him, as being founded in his nature; and therefore it is the highest instance of blasphemy and profaneness to apply them to any creature, since it is in effect to say that he is equal with God.

3. It plainly appears, from scripture, that Christ is the object of religious worship, and consequently that the argument we are maintaining is just, namely, that, for this reason, he must be concluded to be a divine Person. Now that he is the object of religious worship, is evident, from many examples in scripture of such worship being given to him, when, at the same time, they, who have given it, have not been reprov'd or restrained, but rather commended, for performing it. We have various instances of this nature in the Old Testament, of which I shall mention two or three, *viz.* in *Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.* When he speaks of *Abraham* and *Isaac's* walking before him, it implies, that, in their whole conversation, they consider'd themselves as under his all-seeing eye; and *Jacob* acknowledges him as the God, who had sustained, preserved, and provided for him hitherto, the support of his life, and his Deliverer, or Redeemer, from all evil. This divine Person he addresses himself to, in a way of supplication, for a blessing on the posterity of *Joseph*; and that he intends our Saviour hereby, is evident, because he has a reference to his appearance in the form of an Angel, and therefore describes him under that character. Now we cannot suppose that this holy patriarch is here represented as

praying to a created angel, for that would be to charge him with idolatry. Moreover, this is the same description that is given of Christ elsewhere, in *Isai. lxiii. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old; and, in Mal. iii. 1. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the Messenger, or Angel, of the covenant, whom ye delight in;* which contains a very plain prediction of our Saviour's incarnation, whose way is said to be prepared by *John* the Baptist, who is spoken of in the words immediately foregoing. Now it is certain, that God the Father is never called an Angel in scripture, inasmuch as this is a peculiar description of the Mediator, who, as such, is never mentioned as the Person sending, but sent; in which he is consider'd as one that was to be incarnate, and, in our nature, to execute those offices, which he was therein obliged to perform. This is the Person then whom *Jacob* ador'd and pray'd to.

We have another instance, not only of his being worshipped, but of his demanding this divine honour of him that perform'd it, in *Josh. v. 14, 15.* where he appeared as the *Captain of the host of the Lord*; upon which, *Joshua* fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, *What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy; and Joshua did so.* It cannot be supposed that it was any other than a divine Person that appear'd; not only because *Joshua* fell on his face and worshipped him, and expressed his willingness to fulfil his command, but because he bid him loose his shoe from his foot, since the place on which he stood was holy; which expression is no where used in any other text of scripture, except in *Exod. iii. 5.* in which our Saviour, as we before consider'd, appear'd to *Moses*, with the majesty and glory of a divine Person, whose immediate presence made the place relatively holy, which the presence of a creature never did. Moreover, the character which he here gives of himself to *Joshua*, as the Captain of the Lord's host, not only implies, that all his success was owing to his conduct and blessing, on his warlike enterprizes: But this is also agreeable to the description which is elsewhere given of our Saviour,

viour, in *Isai.* lv. 4. in which he is said to be a *Leader and Commander to the people*; and he is called, in *Heb.* ii. 10. *The Captain of our salvation*; and elsewhere, *The Prince of life*; and, *The Prince of the kings of the earth*.

Moreover, there are various instances in the New Testament, of worship given to Christ; in which, by several circumstances contained in it, it is evident, that it was divine or religious. Thus he had divine honour given him by the wise men from the East, in *Matt.* ii. 11. who *fell down and worshipped him*, &c. and, in *Luke* xxiv. 52. when he ascended up into heaven, his disciples *worshipped him*; where there is nothing in the mode of expression that distinguishes this from that worship that is due to God. Moreover, there is a very illustrious instance of his being thus worshipped by a numerous assembly, represented in that vision, in *Rev.* v. 11—13. *I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*; in which words there are such glories ascribed, that higher expressions cannot be used by any, who adore the divine Majesty; and it is plain, that our Saviour is intended hereby, because he is described as the *Lamb that was slain*; and he is also consider'd coordinately with the Father, when it is said, that this glory is given to him that *sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb*. Now if our Saviour be thus worshipped, he must have a right to it, or else his worshippers would have been reprov'd, as guilty of idolatry: thus *Peter* reproveth *Cornelius*, or rather prevents his paying divine adoration to himself, who was no more than a man, in *Acts* x. 26. *Stand up, I myself also am a man*; and the angel, in *Rev.* xix. 10. when *John* at first, through mistake, thinking him to be a divine person, fell at his feet to worship him, expressly forbade him, saying, *See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God*. But our Saviour never forbids any to worship him; therefore we must conclude that he is the object thereof, and consequently a divine Person.

We shall now proceed to consider the

various branches of divine worship that are given to him, viz.

1. Swearing by his name, whereby an appeal is made to him, as the Judge of truth, and the Avenger of falsehood. Some think that the Apostle, in *Rom.* ix. 1. intends as much as this, when he says, *I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not*, that is, I appeal to Christ, as the heart-searching God, concerning the truth of what I say. But there is also another sense of swearing, namely, when, in a solemn manner, we profess subjection to him, as our God and King; which agrees with, or is taken from the custom of subjects, who swear fealty or allegiance to their king: thus it is said, in *Isai.* xlv. 23. *Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*; and, in doing this, they acknowledge him to be the object of faith, and to have a right to universal obedience, as well as to be the Fountain of blessedness. This religious worship, as the prophet foretels, was to be given to the Person here spoken of, who is particularly said to be our Saviour by the Apostle, referring to it in *Rom.* xiv. 11.

2. This leads us to consider another act of religious worship, which has some affinity with the former, contained in the baptismal vow; in which there is a consecration, or dedication, of the person baptised to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the command given, in *Matt.* xxviii. 19. or a publick profession, that it is our indispensable duty to exercise an entire subjection to them, in a religious manner; this is one of the most solemn acts of worship that can be performed, wherein there is an explicit mention of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And here we may consider, in general, that the Son is put coordinately with the Father, which no creature ever is: and it will be also necessary for us to enquire what is meant by being baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that so it may farther appear to be an act of religious worship.

Some hereby understand nothing else but our being baptised by the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or by a warrant received from them to do it: but though this be sometimes the meaning of our acting in the name of God, yet more is intended by this expression, used in the administration of this ordinance, otherwise it is not sufficiently distinguished from all other acts of religious worship; which cannot be rightly performed

184 *Baptism in CHRIST's Name proves his Deity.*

form'd without a divine warrant. According to this sense of the word, ministers may as well be said to preach the gospel, and the church to attend on their ministration, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for this cannot be done without a divine warrant, upon which account it may be deem'd an ordinance.

Moreover, to suppose that this instituted form of administering baptism, conveys no other *Idea*, but that of a divine warrant to do it, is to conclude that there is no determinate meaning of the action perform'd, contain'd in it; but the administrator is to intend nothing else by it, but only that he has a warrant from God to baptise; whereas its being perform'd in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, seems plainly to intimate the principal thing signified thereby, as a direction for our faith, when engaging in it; which is, that they who are baptised are consecrated, or devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, devoted to God professedly, and called by his name, in the sense in which the phrase is elsewhere used in scripture; his right to them is hereby signified, and their indispensable obligation to be entirely his; and that with a peculiar acknowledgment of the distinct personal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the concern that each of them have in our salvation. The Apostle speaking of our being baptised in the name of Christ, calls it, in *Gal. iii. 27. A putting on Christ*; which seems to imply a consecration, or dedication, to him. Persons, as well as things, before this ordinance was instituted, were consecrated to God by divers washings, as well as other rites, used under the ceremonial law; and this seems to be the sense in which the Apostle himself explains this *putting on Christ*, in *Ver. 29.* when he infers, from this action, that they who had so done *were Christ's*, not only by that right, which he has to them, as their Creator and Redeemer, but by another, which is the immediate result of their professed dedication to him; therefore this is such a comprehensive act of worship, that it includes in it the whole of that subjection, which is due to the Father, Son, and Spirit; and since, in particular, the Son is consider'd as the object thereof, together with the Father, it follows that he is God, equal with the Father.

I might here consider, that it would be not only an unwarrantable action, but

an instance of the greatest profaneness, for us to be baptised in the name of any one who is not a divine Person, which farther argues that it is an act of divine worship; upon which occasion, the Apostle *Paul*, speaking concerning some of the church of *Corinth*, as being disposed to pay too great a veneration to those ministers who had been instrumental in their conversion, as though, for this reason, they were to be accounted the lords of their faith; and, in particular, that some said that they *were of Paul*, and, being apprehensive that they thought the minister, who baptised them, had a right to be thus esteem'd, he not only reproves this ungrounded and pernicious mistake; but takes occasion to *thank God*, that *he baptised none of them, but Crispus and Gaius, together with the household of Stephanus, lest any should say he baptised in his own name*; so that while he testifies his abhorrence of his giving any just occasion to any, to conclude that he was the object of this branch of divine worship, he takes a great deal of pleasure in this reflection, that the providence of God had not led them through the ignorance and superstition that prevail'd among them, to draw this false conclusion from his exercising this branch of the ministerial work, which probably they would not have infer'd from any other's having baptised them, who had not so great an interest in their affections as he had. This I apprehend to be the meaning of what the Apostle says, in *1 Cor. i. 12—16.* which I take occasion to refer to, as a farther proof of baptism's being an act of religious worship, unalienable from the Father, Son, and Spirit, in whose name alone we are to be baptised; and I cannot but conclude, that if the Son were not a divine Person, we might as well be baptised in the name of *Paul*, or any other of the Apostles, as in his name, which is a just consequence from its being an act of religious worship; and therefore he would never have join'd his own name with the Father's, when he gave forth this commission to baptise, if he had not had a right to it, as well as the Father.

Again, divine worship is due to Christ, as he is the object of faith; and that not only as we are to depend upon whatever he has reveal'd, as a matter of infallible verity, otherwise the faith of the church, especially under the New Testament dispensation, would be built on an uncertain foundation; but, since I am sensible it

would

would be objected to this, that whatever is transmitted to us by divine inspiration, is infallibly true, though the instruments made use of herein, were not divine Persons; and when we assert that what Christ deliver'd was infallible, in a higher sense than this, we rather suppose than prove his deity; the *Anti-trinitarians* will not deny, that what he imparted was infallibly true, and therefore the object of faith; but they suppose, at the same time, that whatever was imparted to the world by the apostles and prophets, was equally true and infallible; therefore they were the objects of faith, in the same sense that our Saviour himself was.

In answer to this, I would not compare what was deliver'd immediately by our Saviour, with what was transmitted by those who spake and wrote by divine inspiration, or suppose that one was more infallibly true than the other; and therefore that which I would principally insist on, when I speak of Christ, as the object of faith, whereby he appears to be a divine Person, is not only that we are obliged to yield an assent to what he has imparted to us, but this is to be attended with a firm reliance on him, or trusting him, with all we have, or for all we expect, to make us compleatly happy: In this sense we are to understand the Apostle's words, when he says, in *2 Tim. i. 12.* *I know whom I have believed, or trusted, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;* this is such a faith, as no creature is the object of; trust in man is prohibited, and called a departure from God, in *Jer. xvii. 5.* *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, or, by a parity of reason in any other creature, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart herein departeth from the Lord.* Trust is such an act of faith, as is appropriated to a divine Person; and I cannot but observe, that there is something peculiar in the mode of speaking, when Christ is represented as the object thereof, that is never applied to any creature; as his worshippers are said to believe in him: thus, in *John. xiv. 1.* *Ye believe in God, believe also in me;* where he commands his people to believe in him, in such a way, as that this act of faith is

accompanied with other graces, which argue him a divine Person.

This leads us to consider him as the object of supreme love and universal obedience, which are also acts of religious worship; the former respects him, as our chief good and happiness; the latter, as our undoubted Sovereign and Proprietor: We do not say, that a person's having a right to be obey'd, or loved, or trusted, in a limited degree, argues him to be a divine Person; but when these graces are to be exercised in the highest degree, without any possibility of our exceeding therein; and when the exercise thereof is inseparably connected with salvation, as it often is in scripture, and our not exercising them, is said to exclude from it, I cannot but from hence conclude, that, being thus circumstanced, it is an act of religious worship; and it is certain, that our Saviour is often represented, in scripture, as the object thereof.

The last thing that we shall consider, under this *Head*, is, that he is the object of prayer and praise; and that these are parts of religious worship, needs no proof. Some think, and the conjecture is not altogether improbable, that this is intended by the Psalmist, *Psal. lxxii. 15.* *Prayer also shall be made for him continually;* since it might as well be render'd, continually made to him, which agrees with what follows, *And daily shall he be praised;* and that this Psalm respects the Messiah, who had a right to more glory than Solomon, appears from several things, which are said concerning him therein; but I will not insist on this, since we have more evident proofs thereof in other scriptures. It is also foretold concerning him, in *Isai. xi. 10.* that to him, for so the words ought to be render'd, *shall the Gentiles seek;* which mode of speaking is frequently used, to signify our addressing our selves to a divine Person with prayer and supplication, for the supplying of our wants. But we have yet more evident proofs hereof in the New Testament; the *Syrophœnician* woman's prayer, which was directed to him, was, indeed, short, but very comprehensive, *Matt. xv. 22.* *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David;* and, in *Ver. 25.* *She came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me;*

* Creatures are said to be believed, as our Saviour, speaking concerning John the Baptist, in *Mark xi. 31.* says, *Why did ye not believe him?* *Διὰ τί οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ;* and, in *Acts viii. 12.* the Samaritans believed Philip, *ἐπίστευσαν τῷ Φιλίππῳ;* and, in *John v. 46.* Moses is described as a person who ought to be believed; *Had ye believed Moses, &c.* says our Saviour, *ἂν γὰρ ἐπιστεύετε Μωσῆν;* but it is never said that a creature is believed in. This was *Augustin's* observation; upon which occasion he says, *In Exposit. Evangel. Johan. Tract. 29.* "Though we may be said to believe Paul and Peter, yet we are never said to believe in them." But as for our Saviour, we are not only to believe him, namely, what he has spoken, but *πιστεύειν εἰς αὐτόν*, to believe in him.

and this act of religious worship was commended by our Saviour, and her prayer answered. And can we suppose any other than an act of religious worship, contained in that petition of the man who came to him to cast the devil out of his son, in *Mark ix. 24*? *Who said, with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*; by which we are not to understand that he desired that his unbelief should be removed in an objective way, by our Saviour's giving him more convincing arguments to confirm his faith, but by a powerful access to his heart, as the Author and Finisher of faith, which is the peculiar gift of God; and accordingly he is consider'd as a divine Person, by those who thus address themselves to him.

We shall conclude this *Head*, with giving a few instances of short prayers directed to Christ, together with doxologies, or ascriptions of praise, in which he is sometimes joined with the Father and Holy Ghost; and he is also argued, from the subject-matter thereof, to be a divine Person: thus the Apostle Paul concludes his epistles with, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen*; and, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit*; and, *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit*; which is a short and comprehensive prayer directed to Christ, that he would bestow on them all those graces that are necessary to their salvation; and that this grace may so govern and influence their spirits, as to fit them for his service, which supposes him to be the God and Giver of all grace. And, in *2 Cor. xiii. 14*. he puts up a prayer to the three Persons in the Godhead expressly; *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen*; desiring, that they would communicate those blessings which accompany salvation, by which the divine perfections, and in particular the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are demonstrated; and herein the Son is as much consider'd as the object of prayer as the Father, and consequently hereby proved to be a divine Person.

To this we may add those doxologies whereby praise is given to Christ; and so he is farther consider'd, as the object of divine worship: thus, in *2 Pet. iii. 18*. speaking of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he says, *To him be glory, both now and for ever, Amen*; and, in *Jude, Ver. 24*,

25. Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever, Amen; where it is plain that he ascribes this divine glory to Jesus Christ; for he is spoken of in *Ver. 21*. *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life*, that is, for that mercy which shall preserve us unto eternal life, and then confer it upon us; which is the sense of those words, *Keeping us from falling, and presenting us faultless before the presence of his glory*, with a small variation of the phrase; and the very same thing he is expressly said to do elsewhere, in *Eph. v. 27*. *to present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish*, that is, that he may present it to his own view, as taking a survey of his workmanship, when brought to perfection; as God is said *to have taken a view of all things that he had made at first*, when he pronounced them good; and, when he has thus taken a survey of his church, or presented it to himself, then he presents it to the view of the whole world of angels and men, which, as it is said, is attended with exceeding joy; which plainly makes it appear that our Saviour is the Person here spoken of; which is agreeable to what follows, where he is called, as he is elsewhere, *God our Saviour*; which character agrees with the name by which he was most known, to wit, *Jesus*.

Another doxology we have in *Rev. i. 4, 5, 6*. *Grace be unto you, and peace from Jesus Christ, &c. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen*.

There are also two places more, in which, to me, it seems more than probable, that doxologies are directed to Christ, namely, in *1 Tim. vi. 15, 16*. *Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, or can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen*: All allow that nothing greater can be said of God than is here spoken; therefore the only thing denied by the Arians is, that this is applied to any but the Father; but,

* See *1 Cor. xvi. 23*. *Phil. iv. 23*. *1 Thess. v. 28*. *2 Thess. iii. 18*.

* *Gen. i. 31*.

* *Tit. ii. 10, 13*.

* *Philom. 25*.

* *2 Tim. iv. 22*.

Anti-trinitarians differ about worshipping CHRIST. 187

to me; it seems very obvious that it is spoken of Christ, because he is mention'd immediately before: thus, in *Ver. 13.* it is said, *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus; who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession^b; That thou keep this commandment without spot, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall shew; Who is the blessed and only Potentate, &c.* where by *his times* is meant that season in which his glory shall shine most brightly, when, what he witnessed before *Pontius Pilate*, to wit, that he was the Son of God, he will demonstrate in the highest degree, and then will eminently appear to have a right to that glory, which the Apostle ascribes to him.

Again, there is another scripture, in which a glorious doxology is ascribed to Christ, in *1 Tim. i. 17.* *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever; Amen.* A late learned writer^c puts this among those scriptures which he applies to the Father, without assigning any reason for it; which he ought to have done, inasmuch as the context seems to direct us to apply it to the Son, spoken of in the foregoing *Verses*: thus, in *Ver. 12.* *I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; and, Ver. 14.* *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, &c.* and, *Ver. 15.* *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; and, Ver. 16.* *Howbeit, for this cause I obtain'd mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* Thus having mention'd the great things which Christ did for him, it is natural to suppose that he would take occasion, from hence, to ascribe glory to him, which he does in the words immediately following, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, &c.*

Having consider'd the force of this argument, taken from divine worship's being ascribed to Christ, to prove his deity, we shall now proceed to observe the methods used by the *Anti-trinitarians* to

evade it. Some of the *Socinians*, as tho' there had been no scriptures that speak of him as the object of religious worship, have peremptorily denied that it is due to him, and thought very hardly of their brethren, as though they were involv'd in the common guilt of idolatry, which they suppose his worshippers to have been chargeable with. This occasion'd warm debates in *Transylvania* and *Poland*, where *Socinianism* most prevail'd towards the close of the *xvith Century*^d; and, indeed, the method of reasoning, made use of by those who denied that he was the object of worship, though it tended more to his dishonour, yet it carried in it a greater consistency with that scheme of doctrine, which both sides maintain'd, who denied his divinity.

As for the *Arians*, they do not expressly deny him to be the object of worship, but rather deviate from the true sense of the word, when they maintain his right to it; they speak of great honours that are to be ascribed to him, by which one would almost be ready to conclude that they reckon'd him a divine Person; but when these honours are compared with those that are due to the Father, they very plainly discover that they mean nothing more hereby, but what in consistency with their own scheme may be applied to a creature. Thus a late writer^e, in his explication of that text, in *John v. 23.* *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, plainly discovers his sense of divine worship, as due to our Saviour, to be very remote from that which is defended by those who maintain his proper deity. His explication of this text is, "That the meaning is not that the Son's authority should, like that of the Father, be look'd upon as underived, absolute, supreme, and independent; but that as the *Jews* already believed in God, so they should also believe in Christ; as they already honour'd God the Father, so they should also, for the future, honour the Son of God; honour him, as having all judgment committed unto him; honour him, to the honour of the Father, which sent him; acknowledge him to be God,

^b The words are, ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζωοποιούντος τὰ πάντα καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ; where καὶ seems to be exegetical, according to the rule laid down, *Pag. 147.* and therefore I would render the words, *God, who quickeneth all things, even Jesus Christ*; and, if this be a just rendering, then the Father is not mention'd in the context; and therefore this doxology is not ascribed to him, but to our Saviour.

^c See Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, *Pag. 58, 77.*

^d The chief opposers of Christ's being the object of worship, were *Jacobus Palaeologus, Franciscus Davidis, Christianus Franken, Simon Budnaus*; and, on the other hand, it was defended by *Socinus*, and several others, though not in the same sense in which we maintain it.

^e See Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, *Pag. 132.*

188 GOD cannot give a Creature a Right to divine Worship.

"to the glory of the Father." Which is a very low *Idea* of divine honour; for it is as much as to say, that as the Father is to be honour'd as God, so there is a degree of honour, which he has confer'd upon the Son, infinitely below that which is due to himself, but yet call'd divine, because it is given him by a divine warrant. Whether, in this sense, an angel might not have had a warrant to receive divine honour, I leave any one to judge; and, indeed, nothing is contain'd in this sense, but what rather tends to depreciate, than advance the glory of Christ. But that we may better understand how far they allow that religious worship may be given to our Saviour, as well as that we may take occasion to defend that right to divine worship, which we have proved to be due to him, we shall briefly consider, and endeavour to make some reply to the following objections.

Object. 1. To what has been said concerning a right to religious worship, being founded only in a person's having the perfections of the divine nature; and accordingly that 'tis an argument that our Saviour is truly and properly God, equal with the Father, because, as such, he has a right to it, 'tis objected, that if God commands us to worship a creature, we are bound to obey him; and accordingly, without considering any right that is founded in his nature, we are to give divine worship to Christ, by divine direction, or in obedience to a command given us to that purpose; and that such a command was given, upon which Christ's right to receive divine worship is founded, appears from *Heb. i. 6.* *When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him;* which supposes that they did not worship him before, nor would they have done it afterwards, without this divine intimation.

Ans. 1. As to our yielding obedience to a divine command, provided God should require us to give divine worship to a creature, it may be replied, that we do not deny but that all the divine commands are to be obey'd; but yet this supposition is groundless, inasmuch as God cannot command us to worship a creature, any more than he can discharge us from an obligation to worship himself. This, therefore, is, in effect, to suppose what can never be; therefore nothing can be infer'd from such a supposition: we might as well say, that if God should cease to exist, he would cease to be the

object of worship; or if a created being had divine perfection, he would have a right to equal honour with God, which is to suppose a thing that is in it self impossible; and 'tis no less absurd to suppose it warrantable for us to pay divine worship to a creature. This will farther appear, from what has been said in explaining the nature of religious worship. Adoration is a saying to a person, who is the object thereof, thou hast divine perfections, and to say this to a creature, is contrary to truth; and therefore, certainly, the God of truth can never give us a warrant to say that which is false, as this certainly would be. And if we consider worship, as it is our addressing our selves to him, whom we worship, in such a way, as becomes a God, he cannot give us a warrant so to do, for that would be for him to divest himself of his glory; and it would also disappoint our expectations, by putting us on trusting one that cannot save us; and such are justly reprov'd, in *Isai. xlv. 20.* *as having no knowledge, who pray unto a god that cannot save.* We must therefore conclude, that since God cannot give his glory to another, he cannot give any warrant to us to pay divine worship to a creature, as is supposed in the objection.

2. As for that scripture, refer'd to, in which God commanded the angels to worship our Saviour, when he brought him into the world, 'tis not to be supposed that he had no right to divine worship before his incarnation; for if he be a divine Person, as the scriptures assert him to be, the angels, doubtless, adored him as such before; the only new discovery that was then made to them was, that the second Person in the Godhead was now God incarnate; and therefore this instance of infinite condescension was to be consider'd as a motive to excite their adoration, but not the formal reason of it: thus we are sometimes commanded to adore and magnify God for the visible displays of his divine perfections in his works; as the Psalmist says, *Psal. cvii. 8.* *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* and, in many other scriptures, where the works of God are represented, as a means or motive to excite our worship or adoration; whereas the divine perfections, which are display'd or render'd visible therein, are the great foundation or reason thereof; we worship this

God because he is infinitely perfect; tho' we take occasion, from the visible display of his perfections, to worship him. In this sense we understand the worship given to Christ by the angels, when brought into the world; they took occasion, from this amazing instance of his condescension, to adore those perfections, which induced the Son of God to take the human nature into union with his divine, not that they supposed his right to worship was founded therein.

Object. 2. Since our worshipping Christ includes in it ascribing all that glory to him that is his due; 'tis enough for us, when we worship him, to confess that he has an excellency above the angels, or that he is the best of all created beings, as well as the most honourable, and the greatest blessing to mankind, as he was sent of God to instruct us in the way of salvation, as a Prophet, to intercede for us as a Priest, and to give laws to us as a King, and that he has done all this faithfully, and with great compassion to us. These things, and whatever else he does for the advantage of mankind, may, and ought to be acknowledged to his praise, as a debt due to him, in which respect he is to be consider'd as the object of worship; nevertheless, we are not to give him that glory which is due to the Father, as though he were a Person truly and properly divine, in the same sense as he is.

Ans. 1. It is agreed, on both sides, that that glory, which is due to him, is to be ascribed; but, we humbly conceive, that the ascribing to a person that honour, which he has a right to, unless we suppose it to be divine, is not religious worship; or to confess that those works which he has done, are wonderful, and of great advantage to mankind, is no instance of adoration, unless we suppose that these works are such, as none but a Person who has the divine nature can perform; whereas all those works, which they ascribe to him, may, according to them, be performed by a finite being, or else they must allow the arguments, which have been taken from thence, to prove his proper deity.

2. If the works that are ascribed to him be consider'd as properly divine, as they are represented to be in scripture, it must not be concluded, from hence, that he is to be adored, as performing them; but we are rather to take occasion from thence, as was observed in our last *Head*, to adore those divine perfections, which

are evinc'd hereby, which render him the object of worship, as the works of God are motives to induce us to worship him, and not the formal reason of that worship; as when, in the first commandment, God lays claim to divine honour, or obliges the Israelites *to have no other gods before him*, because *he brought them out of the land of Egypt*, we are to consider their deliverance from thence, indeed, as a motive to worship; but it is the divine power that was exerted therein, that was properly the object thereof; so, in *Psal. cxxxvi. 1.* we are *to give thanks to the Lord, whose mercy endureth for ever*; and, in the following *Verses*, there is a particular mention made of some glorious works which God had done, *who alone doth great wonders, who, in wisdom, made the heavens, and stretched out the earth; made the sun to rule by day, and the moon by night, &c.* These, and several other works there mention'd, are all consider'd as motives to excite our adoration; but his being *Jehovah, the God of gods, and Lord of lords*, as in the 1st, 2^d, and 3^d *Verses*, is the great foundation of his right to worship, since that is infinite; whereas his works are only the effects of infinite power, and so a demonstration of his right to divine glory. Now to apply this to those works which are done by our Saviour, if we suppose them, as we ought, to be properly divine, they are to be consider'd only as evincing his right to divine honour, as they are a demonstration of his deity, which is the only thing that renders him the object of divine worship.

Object. 3. But some will proceed a little farther, when they speak of Christ as the object of worship, and so will allow, that honours, truly divine, may be given to him; yet that this does not prove him to be God equal with the Father, since he is herein only consider'd as the Father's Representative, on whom the worship, that is immediately applied to him, must be supposed to terminate; as when an ambassador, who represents the prince that sent him, is consider'd as sustaining that character, and so receives some honour, which otherwise he would have no right to, or rather he is honour'd as personating him whom he represents.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that whatever may be said to be done by an ambassador, as representing the prince that sent him, there is always something contain'd in the manner of his address, or in the honours ascribed to him, that

denotes him to be no more than a subject; and it would be ill resent'd, should he assume that honour to himself that is due to his master; therefore our Saviour, were he not a divine Person, but only the Father's Representative, could not have a right to claim that divine honour that is ascribed to him; neither have we any foundation, in scripture, to distinguish concerning a supreme and subordinate worship, or a worship given to a person that does not terminate in him, but in another, whom he represents.

If there be any apparent foundation for this supposition, it must be taken from those expressions in which Christ is represented as Mediator, as acting in the Father's name, and not seeking his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, or referring all the honour, that is given to him as such, to the Father; but to this it may be replied, that when our Saviour uses such a mode of speaking, he disclaims any right to divine honour due to him as Man, in which respect he received a commission from the Father, and acted in his name; but when the honour of a divine Person is given to him as God, tho' consider'd as Mediator, he is not to be look'd upon as representing the Father, or transferring the divine glory that he receives, to the Father, but as having the same right to it as the Father has, inasmuch as he has the same divine nature, otherwise we cannot account for those modes of speaking, in which the glory of a divine Person is ascribed to him, without restriction or limitation, as it oftentimes is in scripture.

Object. 4. To what has been said in defence of Christ's divinity, from our being baptised in his name, it is objected, that it does not follow, that because we are baptised in the name of the Son, as well as of the Father, that therefore he is God equal with the Father; for though this ordinance, as it respects the Father, contains, properly, an act of divine worship, in which we consider him as the great Lord of all things, to whom divine worship, in the highest sense, is due; yet we consider the Son, as well as the Holy Ghost, only as having a right to an inferior kind of worship, in proportion to the respective parts which they sustain, by the will of the Father, in the work of our salvation; and, in particular, to be baptised in the name of Christ, implies in it nothing else but a declaration that we adhere to him, as the Father's Minister, delegated by him to re-

veal his mind and will to us, and to erect that gospel-dispensation, which we, in this ordinance, professedly submit to; and accordingly to be baptised in the name of Christ, is to be taken in the same sense, as when, in 1 Cor. x. 2. the *Israelites* were said to be baptised into Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea; as they signify'd thereby their consent to be govern'd by those laws, which Moses was appointed, by God, to give them; upon which account, they were denominated a particular church, separated from the world, and obliged to worship God in such a way, as was prescribed in the ceremonial law: even so, by baptism, we own our selves Christians, under an obligation to adhere to Christ, as our Leader and Commander, who has revealed to us the gospel, which, by subjecting our selves to, we are denominated Christians; and to this they also add, especially the *Socinians*, that as baptism was first practised as an ordinance, to initiate persons into the *Jewish* church, and was afterwards applied by our Saviour, to signify the initiating the heathen into the Christian church; so it was design'd to be no longer in use among them, than till Christianity was generally embraced; and consequently we being a Christian nation, are not obliged to submit to it, since we are supposed to adhere to the doctrines of Christianity, and therefore it is needless to signify the same by this ordinance. It was upon this account that *Socinus*, and some of his followers, not only denied the baptism of infants, but that of all others, who were supposed to be Christians.

Ans. 1. As to the first part of this objection, to wit, that baptism does not signify the same thing when it is administer'd in the name of Christ, as when administer'd in the name of the Father, this is founded on a supposition, that the Son has not a right to the same honour that is due to the Father, which ought to be proved, and not taken for granted; and it altogether sets aside the consideration of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost's being herein co-ordinately represented, as the objects of this solemn dedication, which tends very much to derogate from the Father's glory; for God might as well have ordain'd, that we should have been baptised in his name, together with the name of any of his prophets and apostles, which were appointed to be his ministers, in revealing his will to us, as in the name of the Son and Spirit, unless they

they are accounted worthy of having an honour infinitely superior given to them herein.

2. When it is supposed that our professed subjection to Christ in baptism, is nothing else but our consent to be govern'd by those laws, which he has given us in the gospel, and so is compared with that declaration of subjection to the law of *Moses*, which was contained in the baptism of the *Israelites* into *Moses*.

To this it may be replied; that this supposes Christ to be no other than a law-giver; and that to be a Christian, is nothing else but to be professedly a member of that society, which goes under that denomination; and that to put on Christ, is not to consecrate or devote our selves to him as a divine Person, which is a very low *Idea* of Christianity; and consequently the character of a Christian does not imply in it so much, when assumed by an *Anti-trinitarian*, as when applied to those who suppose that they are hereby obliged to honour him, as they honour the Father, or to submit to his government, as truly and properly divine. A Christian is not barely one who is of *Christ's* party, in the same sense as a *Mahometan*, who adheres to the laws of *Mahomet*, is of his; for Christianity contains in it an obligation to perform those religious duties, of trust, universal obedience, and love, that are due to Christ, as a divine Person.

3. As to the supposition, that baptism being an ordinance of Profelytism to the Christian faith, therefore a Christian nation is no longer obliged to submit to it, this is directly contrary to what our Saviour says, in the words immediately following the institution thereof, in *Matt.* xxviii. 20. *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*, that is, you may expect my presence with you in administering this ordinance, as well as preaching the gospel, not only during the first age of the church, till Christianity shall obtain in the world, but as long as there shall be a society of Christians in it. And, indeed, if Christianity were nothing more than a publick declaration of our obligation, to adhere to the laws of Christ; it does not follow, that, because we are born in a Christian nation, therefore such a profession is no longer necessary; but since more than this is contain'd therein, as hath been before observed, namely, our professed subjection to Christ, in a religious way, as a divine

Person, this extends the baptismal obligation much farther than to our being called Christians, and argues the necessity of our engaging in this ordinance, as long as Christ is the object of faith, or to be acknowledged to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, and, as such, the object of religious worship, namely, unto the end of the world.

Object. 5. There is another objection against the argument in general, relating to Christ's being the object of divine worship, taken from his having refused to have one of the divine perfections ascribed to him, and directing the Person that gave it, to ascribe it to the Father, in *Matt.* xix. 17. *He said unto him, Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God; q. d.* there is but one Person who is good, as goodness is properly a divine attribute, and that is the Father; and therefore he alone is the object of that worship, which consists in the ascribing the perfections of the divine nature to him, in which sense we have before supposed religious worship to be understood.

Answer. 1. As to what our Saviour says, concerning the divine unity, when he asserts, that there is none good but one, that is God, it is, doubtless, to be understood in the same sense with all other scriptures, that deny a plurality of gods, in opposition to the principles and practice of idolaters; but it does not follow from hence, that the Father is the only Person who is God, or the object of divine worship; this has been before consider'd^f, and therefore all that I shall reply to this part of the objection is, that the word *God* is sometimes taken for the *Godhead*, without a particular restriction or limitation thereof, either to Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, but may be equally applied to them all. In this sense it is to be taken, when the being of a God is demonstrated by the light of nature; as from the effects of the divine power, we argue, that there is a God, who is the Creator of all things; but this cannot, if we have no other light to guide us herein but that of nature, be applied to the Father, as a distinct Person in the Godhead, for the distinction that there is between the divine Persons is a matter of pure revelation; therefore all that our Saviour intends by this expression is, that no one has a right to have divine perfections ascribed to him, but he that has a divine nature, which, whether it be meant of

^f See *Pag.* 150, 151.

the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, he is denominated *the one only living and true God*.

It follows from hence, that when such modes of speaking are used in scripture, though the Father be called the one or only God, the Son is not excluded, as a late judicious writer well observes^s.

2. As to that part of the objection, which concerns our Saviour's blaming the man for calling him good, there are two senses given of it; one is taken from a different reading of the words, namely, *Why dost thou ask me concerning good*ⁿ. But it will not be much to our purpose either to defend or disprove this reading, since *Mark* and *Luke* read it, *Why callest thou me good*, &c. therefore, passing this over, and supposing that it ought to be read, as we generally do, the common answer that is given to this objection, which, I humbly conceive, may be well acquiesced in, is, that our Saviour considers the man, as ascribing a divine perfection to him, whom, at the same time, he concluded to be no more than a creature, and therefore it is as though he should say, either; first, acknowledge me to be a divine Person, or else do not ascribe divine honours to me, for then, by consequence, thou mightest as well ascribe them to any other creature; and accordingly, by the same method of reasoning, had he convers'd with any *Anti-trinitarian*, in his day, who had given divine worship to him, and yet denied his proper deity, he would have reproved him for this mistake arising from an erroneous conscience, as much

as he does the man, whom he reproves, in the same sense, for styling him good.

That Christ does not exclude himself from having a right to this divine perfection, is not only evident, from those several scriptures, which have been before refer'd to, that ascribe perfections to him that are equally divine, inasmuch as he that has a right to one divine perfection, has a right to all; but he also styles himself, in *John* x. 14. *The good Shepherd*, which certainly imports as much as *good Master*, which expression was used by the man before-mention'd; and that his being the good Shepherd, argues him to be the Fountain of blessedness, which is certainly a divine perfection, is evident, because he speaks of himself, as communicatively good in the highest sense, *Ver.* 28. *I give unto them, viz. my sheep, eternal life.*

Secondly, Having proved the deity of the Son, we proceed to consider that of the Holy Ghost, in which we are obliged to oppose the *Socinians* and *Arians*, though in different respects: As for the *Socinians*, they seem to be divided in their sentiments about this matter, some of them considering the Holy Ghost no otherwise than as a divine power; and therefore they call him *Virtus Dei*, or the divine energy, or power of acting, seeming, by this account of it, to deny his distinct personality, as the *Sabellians* do that of the Son and Spirit; though others of them, being convinced that there is sufficient proof of his personality in scripture, deny his deity, supposing him

^s See Dr. Waterland's defence of the divinity of Christ, *Serm.* IV. *Pag.* 127. & *seq.* where he proves, that the exclusive terms of *One, only*, &c. do not except the Son, so as to deny him to have the same Godhead with the Father: This he proves from several scriptures, *viz.* *Matt.* xi. 27. *No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor any one the Father, save the Son*; it does not follow, from hence, that the Father does not know himself, nor the Son himself; and when it is said, in *1 Cor.* ii. 11. *The things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God*; This does not exclude the Son; for that would contradict the scripture, but now mention'd, no more than the Son's only knowing the Father excludes the Holy Ghost, which would be contrary to this scripture; so in *Rev.* xix. 12. it is said, that the Son had a name written, which no one knew but he himself: None ever thought that the Father was excluded by this exclusive term; so when God the Father saith, in *Isai.* xlv. 24. *I am he that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by my self*; this would contradict many other scriptures, which speak of the Son, as the Creator of all things, if he were to be excluded by it. Again, when the Psalmist saith, concerning the Father, in *Psal.* lxxxiii. 18. that *his name alone is Jehovah*, we must set aside all those scriptures in which our Saviour is called *Jehovah*, if he is contained in this exclusive term. See more to this purpose in the said Sermon, in which this argument is managed with a great deal of judgment. I shall only take leave farther to cite what is well observed in *Pag.* 133. "That, perhaps, the word *God*, in those places, namely, such in which there are these exclusive terms, is to be understood in the indefinite sense, abstracting from the particular consideration of *this* or *that* person, in like manner as the word *Man* often stands not for any particular human person, but the whole species, or human nature; as when we say, *Man is frail*; *Man is mortal*, or the like."

ⁿ *Τί με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ.* Beza speaks of two or three of the most ancient copies in which this reading is found; and Grotius also adheres to it, from the credit, as he says, of the most ancient and correct copies; and it is also observed, that the vulgar *Latin Version* renders it so; and *Augustin* read it so in the copy that he made use of: And whereas the Evangelists, *Mark* and *Luke*, read it, *Why callest thou me good*, he endeavours to reconcile this different reading therewith, as supposing there was a seeming contradiction between them; which he might better have done, by referring to some copies which had it, as we read it, *Why callest thou me good*; from whence, 'tis probable, he saw none that so render'd it in his time. *Vid. Augustin. de Consensu Evang.* Lib. II. Cap. 63. It is also thus translated in the ancient *Hebrew Version* of the gospel of *Matthew*.

The HOLY GHOST prov'd to be God, from Acts v. 3, 4. 193

to be no other than a created ministring Spiritⁱ.

As for the *Arians*, though this controversy was not brought upon the stage in the council at *Nice*, which was so much employ'd in defending the deity of our Saviour, by proving him to have the same essence with the Father, that they had no opportunity to proceed in the defence of the consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost; yet this is universally denied by all who give into the *Arian* scheme: 'Tis true, that as they don't question his personality, so they allow that he has many glories ascribed to him, agreeing, in words, with the scripture account thereof; but they are, notwithstanding, far from asserting his proper deity, any more than that of the Son.

We have already proved him to be a distinct Person^k, and therefore nothing remains, but that we consider him as having a divine nature; and, to make this appear, we shall proceed in the same method, in which we have proved the divinity of the Son, namely, from those divine names, attributes, works, and worship, which are ascribed to him; though we have no occasion here to insist on the proof of that proposition, that he who is thus described is God, as having done that already under each of those distinct *Heads*, in defence of our Saviour's deity; and therefore we need only consider them as applied to the Holy Ghost. And,

1. It appears that he is God, equal with the Father and Son, inasmuch as the same divine names are given to him that are given to them; particularly,

(1.) He is called *God*, without any thing tending to detract, or diminish, from the proper sense of the word, when applied to the Father or the Son: thus, in *Acts* v. 3, 4. Peter said, Ananias, *Why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*, where he is not only called *God*, but put in opposition to the creature; and it is as though the Apostle should say, thou hast endeavour'd to deceive him, by whom I am inspired, which is a greater crime, than if thou had'st only lied to me.

Object. 'Tis objected, that it is not the Holy Ghost who is here called *God*, but the Father; in defence of which sense

of the text it is supposed, that though the lie was immediately design'd to deceive the Apostles, or the Holy Ghost, by whom they were known to be inspired, yet this was interpreted by God the Father, as an attempt to impose upon him, whose Minister the objecters suppose the Holy Spirit to be, as well as the Apostles; and accordingly they thus argue; He that does any thing against God's ministers, to wit, the Father's, may be said to do the same against him. And here they refer to some scriptures, which, they think, give countenance to this argument, namely, *Exod.* xvi. 8. where *Moses* tells the *Israelites*, when they murmured against him, *Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord*; and, in *1 Sam.* viii. 7. where God says to *Samuel*, speaking concerning the *Israelites*, *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me*; and also our Saviour's words to his disciples, in *Luke* x. 16. *He that beareth you, beareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*; and, in *1 Thess.* iv. 8. *He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit*^l.

Ans. How plausible soever this objection may seem to be, yet, if duly consider'd, it will not appear sufficient to overthrow the argument we are maintaining; 'tis true, indeed, that what is done against any one, who acts by a commission, as a servant to another, is interpreted to be done against him that gives him the commission; as he that affronts a judge, or an ambassador, in this respect, affronts the king, whom he represents; or if an inferior servant is ill treated, in delivering a message from his master, this is always supposed to contain a reflection on him who sent him: But, I humbly conceive, this cannot be applied, as it is in the objection, to Ananias's *not lying unto men, but unto God*; and, to make this appear, let it be consider'd, that here are two terms of opposition; and these either respect God the Father and the Apostles; or God the Father and the Holy Ghost; or else God the Holy Ghost and the Apostles.

1. God the Father cannot be said here to be opposed to the Apostles, so as to give countenance to this phrase, or mode

ⁱ In this they agree with those who were formerly called *Macedonians*, from *Macedonius*, bishop of *Constantinople*, who lived about the middle of the 14th Century, who entertain'd such sentiments of the Holy Ghost, and had a considerable party that adhered to him, who were also called *Pneumatomachi*.

^k See *Page* 118, 119.

^l See *Wolffzen*, and other *Socinian* writers, *in loc.* and *Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine*, *Page* 13. where he inserts this among those scriptures; in all which he supposes that the word *God* is applied to the Father.

of speaking used, *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*, because it is said, in the foregoing *Verse*, that *they had lied to the Holy Ghost*; if the Holy Ghost had not been mention'd, indeed, then there might have been more ground to conclude, that *Peter* opposed himself to God the Father, or intimated hereby, that *Ananias*, in attempting to deceive him, attempted to deceive God that sent him; but even then it would not have fully corresponded with the sense of those scriptures but now refer'd to; for though he that despises a servant, despises him that sent him; and, accordingly, he that despises a minister, when he is preaching the gospel, or despises the message that he brings, may be said to despise God, whose message it is; yet it does not follow, that if a person designs to impose upon a minister, in other respects, that he imposes upon God that sent him; for he may not disown the divine authority, or commission, which he has to preach the gospel, and yet may conclude that he may deceive him, though he be sensible that he cannot deceive God, who knoweth all things: But this I need not farther insist on, since it is not supposed, in the objection; but God the Father is therein opposed to the Holy Ghost, or else there would be no appearance of any argument in it; therefore,

2. Let us consider God the Father as being here opposed to the Holy Ghost; and then it is as much as to say, *Thou hast lied to the Holy Ghost*, wherein thou hast not lied to man, but to God, to wit, the Father; to which we may answer,

That had the Apostle designed to oppose the Holy Ghost to the Father, and thereby deny his deity, it ought to have been express'd thus; *Thou hast not lied unto the Holy Ghost, but unto God*; and this would effectually have determin'd him not to have been God, and remov'd any umbrage or suspicion, as though, by the expression, *Thou hast not lied unto men*, we were to understand the Apostles; or since it will be objected, that this would have been contrary to matter of fact, for *Ananias* did lie both to the Apostles and to the Holy Ghost; therefore it would have been better understood, had it been said, *Thou hast not lied to the Holy Ghost, or to men*, that is, not to them only, but thou hast, interpretatively, in lying to them, lied unto God, to wit, the Father; if it had been so express'd, the sense would have been plain and obvious, in favour of the *Anti-trinitarians*, as well

as agreeable to the scriptures before-mention'd, as giving countenance to it; but since it is not so express'd, we must conclude,

3. That in this text there is no other opposition, but of God the Holy Ghost to the Apostles; and accordingly the sense is very plain and natural, which is as though the Apostle had said, *Thou hast endeavour'd to deceive me*, who am under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is a greater crime than if thou had'st only lied to me, at another time, when this honour was not confer'd upon me; for herein thou hast committed a double crime, inasmuch as thou hast not only lied to me, which thou oughtest not to have done, but thou hast lied to the Holy Ghost, and, in so doing, hast not lied unto men, but unto God; or, as it is express'd, in *Ver. 9.* that, *Ananias and his wife had agreed together to tempt the Holy Ghost*; what is called a *lying to him*, in one *Verse*, is stiled a *tempting him* in the other; this therefore seems to be a plain and easy sense of the words, which any unprejudiced reader would be inclined to give into; and since the scripture is written to instruct the most injudicious Christians, as well as others, I cannot conceive that such modes of speaking would have been made use of therein, which have a tendency to lead persons out of the way, by deviating from the common sense of words, (especially in a matter of so great importance as this is) whereby some, at least, would be inclined, as we are, by adhering to the most proper sense thereof, to acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be God, if he were not so.

There is another scripture, in which the Holy Ghost is called, *The God and the Rock of Israel*, in *2 Sam. xxiii. 3.* Now it seems very evident, that this is applied to him, by comparing it with the foregoing and following words; in which 'tis said, the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue; and then we have an account of what he said, namely, *He that ruleth over man, must be just*, &c. It cannot, with any colour of reason, be supposed that there is more than one Person here intended, who imparted this to the prophet; and inasmuch as this Person is not only called the God, but also the Rock of *Israel*, that is a plain intimation that he is the almighty God of *Israel*, which is the sense of the metaphor, taken from a rock, when applied to God in other scriptures.

Again,

Divine Attributes prove the Deity of the HOLY GHOST. 195

Again, 'tis said, in 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.* Here it must be observed, that their being called the temple of God, who is said to dwell in them, denotes the inhabitant to be a divine Person, since a temple, according to the known acceptation of the word, always connotes a deity; and so it is called the house of God. Now he that dwelt in them, upon which account they are called his temple, is expressly said to be the Spirit of God, which is agreeable to what is said concerning him elsewhere, in Chap. vi. 19. *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which, or who, is in you?*

(2.) He is called *Lord*; this seems very evident, from *Isai. vi. 8, 9. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not, &c.* where we observe, that the person sending speaks both in the singular number and the plural, *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us*; by the former expression, *Whom shall I send*, he evinces his divinity, as having a right to give a commission to the prophets, to declare his mind and will to man, which, as will be observed under a following *Head*, none but a divine Person has a right to do; by the latter, *Who shall go for us*, he includes himself among the Persons in the Godhead, as it has before been observed^m; that when God is represented, as speaking in the plural number, a Trinity of Persons seems to be intended thereby: But that which we shall principally consider is, that the Holy Ghost is here called *Lord*, which appears from what the Apostle says, in *Acts xxviii. 25, 26. Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand, &c.*

It cannot be reasonably objected to this, that the Apostle only refers to the book of *Isaiah*, and not to this particular part thereof; for though, indeed, these words, *Thus saith the Holy Ghost*, might be used, as a preface to any quotation from scripture, as all scripture is given by his inspiration; yet this message, refer'd to by the Apostle, was not only transmitted by *Esaias* to the church, but it is distinguished from all those other things,

which the Spirit of the Lord spake by him; and therefore it cannot be supposed that the Apostle means, when referring to this scripture, any other than the Holy Ghost's giving him this commission, when he says, *Well spake the Holy Ghost by him*, and consequently he that gave this commission, or spake thus to him, is the Holy Ghost, who is, in the foregoing words, called *the Lord*.

Moreover, there is another scripture, in 2 Cor. iii. 18. where 'tis said, *We are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*; or, as it is observed in the margin, *As by the Lord the Spirit*; which reading is certainly as proper as any other, and is prefer'd, by some, to all others; and therefore it contains, at least, a probable argument that the Spirit is expressly called *Lord*ⁿ.

2. The Holy Ghost appears to be God, from those divine attributes that are ascribed to him. Accordingly,

(1.) He is said to be eternal, in *Heb. ix. 14. Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offer'd himself, without spot, to God.* I am sensible, many think that this eternal Spirit signifies Christ's eternal Godhead; which is so called, because of the spirituality of its nature; and that, in this place, it is designed to set forth the infinite value, which the oblation that he made of himself, in his human nature to God, received from the divine nature, to which it was united, which, though it be a very great truth, yet there does not seem to be so great a propriety in the expression, when we suppose the eternal Spirit is taken for the divine nature, as if it be understood of the Holy Ghost; and Christ may be said, by him, to have offer'd himself, without spot, to God, as implying, that the unction, which he received from the Holy Ghost, was the means to preserve him from all sinful defilement, upon which account his oblation was without blemish; and, indeed, it was no less necessary, in order to its being accepted, that it should be spotless, than that it should be of infinite value; therefore I must conclude, that it is the Holy Ghost who is here called the eternal Spirit.

Moreover, his eternity may be evinced from his having created all things, as he that made the world, and all finite things, wherewith time began, must be before them, and consequently from everlasting;

^m See Pag. 170.

ⁿ Several of the Post-Nicene Fathers have taken the words, *καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*, in the same sense as by the Lord, the Spirit; and, in particular, Basil. *de Spirit. Sanct. ad Amphiloc. Cap. 21.* & Chrysost. *in loc.*

196 *Divine Works prove the Deity of the HOLY GHOST.*

by which the eternity of Christ was proved, under a foregoing *Head*; and that the Holy Ghost made all things, will be proved under our next argument.

(2.) His immensity, or omnipresence, is a farther proof of his deity; and this seems to be plainly contain'd in *Psal. cxxxix. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? q. d.* there is no place where the Spirit is not; and it is allowed by all, that the divine immensity is here described in a very elegant manner; though, it is true, it is objected, that one part of this *Verse* is exegetical of the other, and therefore the Psalmist, by the Spirit, intends nothing else but the presence of God; but it is equally, if not more probable, that the Spirit is distinguished from the presence of God, and consequently that he is a distinct Person in the Godhead; and this does not contain any strain upon the sense of the words, since the Spirit is so often spoken of in scripture as a Person, as has been before observed^o; and therefore it is not strange that he should be mention'd as such in this text; and, if he be spoken of as a Person, it is beyond dispute that he is here proved to be a divine Person.

(3.) He is said to be omniscient, in *1 Cor. ii. 10. The Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God.* To search, indeed, is a word used in condescension to our common mode of speaking, as we arrive to the knowledge of things by searching, or enquiry, though this *Idea* is to be abstracted from the word, when applied to God; for him to search, is to know all things; and, in this sense, it is used, in *Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, &c.* It does not imply the manner of his knowing, but the exquisiteness of his knowledge; and so we must understand it in this scripture, when applied to the Spirit's searching all things, in which we have an account of the objects of his knowledge, namely, *the deep things of God*: thus he knows all those things, which were hid in the divine mind from all eternity, and the infinite perfections of the divine nature, which are incomprehensible to a creature, and which none can, *by searching, find out to perfection*, *Job xi. 7.* in which respect the highest creatures, viz. the angels, are said to be *charged with folly*, whose knowledge is comparatively imperfect,

Chap. iv. 18. Moreover, we may observe, that the manner of the Spirit's knowing all things, is not like ours, that is, by infering consequences from premises, in a way of reasoning; for it is said, in the *Verse* immediately following, that *he knows the things of God*, in such a way, as *a man knoweth the things of a man*, that is, his own thoughts, by an internal principle of knowledge, not by revelation, or any external discovery: thus the Spirit knows the divine nature, as having it; therefore his omniscience is a plain proof of his deity.

3. The deity of the Holy Ghost may be farther evinced, from his performing those works which are proper to God alone. And,

(1.) He is said to have created all things: thus, in *Gen. i. 2. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*; where, by the Spirit of God, cannot be meant, as some suppose, the air or the wind; for that was not created till the second day, when God made the firmament. Again, it is said, in *Job xxvi. 13. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens*; and, in *Chap. xxxiii. 4. The Spirit of God hath made me.* Some of the *Arians* are so sensible that the Spirit is represented as the Creator of all things, as well as the Son; that they suppose him to be an Instrument to the Son in the creation thereof, which is as much as to say, he is an Instrument of an Instrument; and, indeed, to say the Son created all things, as an Instrument, has been consider'd, as an indefensible notion^p; but this is much more so.

(2.) Extraordinary or miraculous works, which are equivalent to creation, have been performed by the Spirit: thus the Apostle, speaking concerning extraordinary gifts, subservient to the propagation of the gospel, in the first preaching thereof, attributes them to the Spirit, which he largely insists on, in *1 Cor. xii.* and when he says, *Ver. 4, 5, 6. that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all*; which many, who defend the doctrine of the Trinity, take for granted, that it signifies all the Persons in the Godhead, that our Saviour is called *Lord*, and the Father *God*, therein; and some of the *Anti-trinitarians*, from hence, would argue, that the Spirit is not God, because he is di-

^o See Pag. 118, 119.

^p See Pag. 171, 172.

stinguished

tinguished from the Father, whom they suppose to be there called God, I cannot but from hence conclude, that the Holy Spirit is set forth under all these three names; and the works attributed to him, notwithstanding the variety of expressions are the same, and included in that general term of *spiritual gifts*. And so I take the meaning of the text to be this, there are diversities of gifts, or extraordinary operations, which some were enabled to put forth in the exercise of their ministry, which are all from the same Spirit, who is call'd Lord and God, who has an infinite sovereignty, and bestows these blessings as he pleases, as becomes a divine Person; and this agrees very well with what is said, in *Ver. 11. All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally, as he will.*

(3.) The Spirit of God commissioned and qualified ministers to preach the gospel, and thereby to gather and build up churches, determining that their ministry should be exercised in one place, and not in another, which is a peculiar branch of the divine glory, and no one has a right to do it, but a divine Person. A creature may as well pretend to command the sun to shine, or stop its course in the heavens at his pleasure, as he can commission a minister to preach the gospel, or restrain the preaching thereof. And here we may observe, that the Holy Ghost is plainly said to have called and appointed the Apostles to exercise their ministry in the first preaching of the gospel, after he had, by conferring extraordinary gifts upon them, qualified them for it; and accordingly he speaks in a stile truly divine, in *Acts xiii. 2. The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them*; and, in *Acts xx. 28. the Apostle tells the elders, or ministers of the church at Ephesus, that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers*. We read also of the Spirit's determining where they should exercise their ministry; thus he commanded *Philip* to go and preach the gospel to the eunuch, in *Acts viii. 29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot*; and, at another time, the Spirit bade *Peter* to go and preach the gospel to *Cornelius*, when he doubted whether it were lawful for him to do it or no, in *Acts x. 19, 20. The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee; therefore get thee down, and go with them,*

doubting nothing, for I have sent them; and, at another time, it is said, in *Acts xvi. 6, 7. They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia*; and that *they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not*; and, in *Ver. 9, 10. the Apostle Paul* was order'd, in a vision, to go to *Macedonia*; which command he obey'd, *assuredly gathering that the Lord, that is, the Spirit, had called him to preach the gospel unto them*: nothing can be a greater argument of the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, in what respects this matter, which was of the highest importance, therefore it is an evident proof of his divinity. But to this we may add,

(4.) That his divinity farther appears from the unction, which he confer'd on our Saviour, to perform the work of a Mediator in his human nature: thus it is said, in *Isai. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, &c.* And this is particularly refer'd to, as signifying our Saviour's unction by the Holy Ghost, in *Luke iv. 18, 19. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me, &c.* And, indeed, it is not denied that this is spoken of the Holy Ghost, even by those who do not infer his deity from it; accordingly it is inserted, by a late writer, among those scriptures that speak particularly of the Holy Ghost^a; and it would be a great strain on the sense of the text, to suppose that *he hath anointed me*, refers to the Father, and not to the Spirit. As to the meaning of the word *Unction*, it is borrow'd from the ceremonial law, under which the prophets, priests, and kings, were publicly anointed with oil, as used to signify the warrant, or commission, they had received from God, to execute these offices, together with the qualifications which were to be expected for the discharge thereof. In this sense our Saviour is said to have been anointed by the Holy Ghost, to wit, in his human nature, in which he was obliged to yield obedience and subjection to God, and accordingly he was authorised and qualified to perform this obedience by the Holy Ghost; so that, how difficult soever it was, it might be discharged by him, without the least failure or defect therein, as we observed before, that it was owing hereunto that his oblation was without spot: the work was certainly extraordinary, and

^a See Dr. Clarke's Scripture-doctrine, Pag. 198.

consequently the glory redounding to the Holy Ghost, from hence, is such as proves him to be a divine Person.

(5.) He farther appears to be so, inasmuch as the work of grace, both as to the beginning, progress, and compleating of it, in the souls of believers, is ascribed to him, as well as to the Father and the Son. That this is a work of God's almighty power, and consequently too great to be perform'd by any creature; and that the Holy Ghost is, in particular, the Author thereof, we shall here take for granted, without attempting to prove it, which would not be a just method of reasoning, were we not led to insist on this subject, under some following *Answers*, in which this will be more particularly proved. And if the work appears to be the effect of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, whereby we are regenerate and sanctified, and enabled to overcome all the opposition which attends it, till we are brought to glory, then he, who is the Author hereof, will evidently appear to be the God of all grace; and therefore we shall proceed to consider,

4. That the Holy Ghost appears to be God, inasmuch as he has a right to divine worship. That none but a divine Person has a right hereunto, has been already proved; and that the Spirit has a right to it, might be evinced, from his having those divine perfections, which, as has been before observed, are ascribed to him in scripture; since he has the perfections of the divine nature, which are the objects of adoration, then it follows, that he is to be adored; and if he has performed those works, which argue him to be the Proprietor of all things, this must be acknowledged; and if all that grace, which is necessary to make us meet for the heavenly blessedness, be his work and gift, it follows from hence, that he is to be sought to for it, which is a great branch of religious worship. But this being only an improvement of, or a deduction from those foregoing arguments, laid down to prove his deity, we shall enquire whether we have not something that contains in it the obligation of a command, or whether there are not some examples, which are equivalent thereunto, which will farther warrant our giving divine worship to him. Some suppose, that that prayer is directed to the Holy Ghost, which is mention'd in *Acts* i. 24, 25. *Thou, Lord,*

which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship; and the reason of this supposition is, because the designation of persons to the exercise of their ministry, as well as the extraordinary gifts with which they were furnished, is peculiarly applied to the Holy Ghost in this *Book*; therefore, it is supposed, they prayed to the Holy Ghost, that he would signify whom he had chosen to the apostleship, in the room of *Judas*, of those two that were nominated by them; but this being, at most, but a probable argument, I shall lay no stress upon it.

But, I humbly conceive, that we have a more evident example of prayer made to the Holy Ghost, in *2 Thess.* iii. 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ;* it seems more than probable that the Holy Ghost, who is here called Lord, is prayed to; for he is distinguished from the Father and Son; and the Apostle prays to him that he would direct them into the love of the Father, and enable them, patiently, to wait for the Son.

Again, there is another instance hereof, in *1 Thess.* iii. 12, 13. *The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, to the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;* where the Holy Ghost seems to be the Person prayed to; and is plainly distinguished from the Father and Son, inasmuch as what is pray'd to him for, is their being holy before the Father, at the coming of the Son.

There is another scripture, in which it is still more evident, that the Apostle prays to the Holy Ghost, together with the Father and Son, *viz.* *2 Cor.* xiii. 14. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen;* where, in that part of this prayer, which respects the Holy Ghost, is contain'd an humble supplication, that he would be pleased to manifest himself to them, or that he would communicate to them those graces which they stood in need of; that so, as the church is said elsewhere, in *1 John* i. 3. to have *fellowship with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ.* Here the Apostle prays that they may have fellowship with the Holy Ghost; and how can this blessing be prayed for, without supposing him addressing himself herein to

* See Quest. LIX. LXVII. LXXII. LXXV.

the Holy Ghost? Whenever any thing is desired, or prayed for, that can be consider'd no otherwise than as an effect, produced by a free agent, this prayer, or desire, is supposed more immediately to be directed to him: As suppose a person should use this mode of speaking, in presence of a disobliged friend; Oh that he would look upon me, that he would converse with me, or that he would discover his wonted love unto me! though, according to the form of expression, it seems not to be directed to him, yet every one would suppose it to be equivalent to an immediate address made to him to that purpose; wherefore, for the Apostle to desire that the Holy Ghost would have communion with, that is, converse with, and manifest himself to them, in performing all those works, which were necessary for their edification and salvation, this desire cannot contain less than a prayer to him.

We shall now proceed to consider some objections, brought by the *Anti-trinitarians*, against the deity of the Holy Ghost.

Object. A divine Person cannot be the gift of God, for that supposes him to be at his disposal, and inferior to him; but the Spirit is said to be given by him, in *Neb. ix. 20. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them*; and, in *Acts xi. 17. God gave them the like gift*, meaning the Spirit, *that he did unto us*; and, in *Luke xi. 13. God, the Father, is said to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*. Again, the Spirit is said to be *sent*, and that either by the Father, as in *John xiv. 26. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name*; or by the Son, as in *Chap. xvi. 7. If I depart, I will send him unto you*. Again, he is said to receive what he communicates from another, in *John xvi. 14. He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you*; which is inconsistent with the character of a divine Person, who is never said to receive what he imparts to others, as the Apostle speaks concerning God, in *Rom. xi. 35. Who hath first given to him*. Again, he is said not to speak of himself, but what he hears, when he shews things to come, *John xvi. 13. Accordingly he did not know that which he was to communicate before he heard it*. Again, he is said to have a mind distinct from God, unless we suppose that there are a plurality of gods, and so more distinct divine minds than one; for this,

they bring that scripture, in *Rom. viii. 27. He that searcheth the heart, knoweth the mind of the Spirit*. Again, he is represented as making intercession, which is an act of worship, and consequently he cannot be the object thereof; *Ver. 26. The Spirit it self maketh intercession for us, &c.* this also argues that he is not possessed of the blessings which he intercedes for. Again, he is not only said to be resisted and grieved, which expressions, 'tis true, are sometimes applied to God, though in an improper sense, speaking after the manner of men; but the Spirit is said to be quench'd, or extinguish'd: thus, *1 Thess. v. 19. this, together with what has been before said concerning him, is not applicable to a divine Person*. These are the most material objections that are brought against the doctrine which we have been endeavouring to maintain, and the sum of them all is this; that it is inconsistent with the character of a divine Person to be thus dependent on, and subjected to the will of another, as the Spirit is supposed, by them, to be.

Answer. That we may defend the Godhead of the Holy Ghost against such-like objections as these, we shall first premise something relating to all those scriptures which speak of the Spirit, as given or sent by the Father, and then apply it to the sense of those in particular which are brought to support the objections, as before mentioned.

i. It may be easily observed, that in several places of scripture, especially in the New Testament, the Holy Ghost is often taken for the gifts or graces of the Spirit; and more particularly for that extraordinary dispensation, in which the Apostles were endowed with those spiritual gifts, which were necessary for the propagation and success of the gospel: these, by a *Metonymy*, are called the *Spirit*; and, I humbly conceive, all those scriptures, which speak of the Spirit's *being pour'd forth*, as in *Prov. i. 23. and Joel ii. 28. compared with Acts ii. 17. and elsewhere, are to be understood in this sense*; and thus it is explain'd, in *Acts x. 44, 45. The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*; upon which occasion it is said, that *upon the Gentiles was pour'd out the gift of the Holy Ghost*. Thus we are to understand that scripture, in *Acts xix. 2. We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*; and another in *John vii. 39. The Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet*

yet glorified; the word *given* is supplied by our translators, probably, to fence against a weak argument of some *Anti-trinitarians*, taken from that text, to overthrow the eternity of the Spirit; but whether the word be supplied or no, the sense of the text is plainly this, that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were not confer'd before Christ's ascension into heaven; which is a farther confirmation of this acceptation of the word, or of this figurative way of speaking, being used in this, and several other places of scripture, to the same purpose.

2. All those scriptures which seem to represent the Holy Ghost, as inferior to the Father and Son, some of which are contain'd in the objection, may be understood as denoting the subserviency of the works of the Spirit, which are also call'd the *Holy Ghost*, to those works which are said to be perform'd by the Father and Son: Now it is certain, that the subserviency of one work unto another, perform'd by different persons, does not necessarily infer the inferiority of one person to the other: accordingly we must distinguish between the Spirit, as subsisting, and as acting; in the former sense, he is a divine Person, equal with the Father and Son; in the latter, he may be said to be subservient to them.

But now we shall proceed to consider the sense of those scriptures, brought to support the objection, in consistency with what has been premised. The first scripture mention'd, in which it is said, *Thou gavest them thy good Spirit to instruct them*; where the Holy Ghost is described with a personal character, and probably 'tis not to be understood metonymically for his gifts and graces; accordingly the meaning of it seems to be this; that the Spirit's efficiency, in guiding and instructing them, was a special gift of God confer'd upon them; and, in this respect, though he was a sovereign Agent, yet he is said to act by the will of the Father, which is the same with his own will; for though the Persons in the Godhead are distinct, yet they have not distinct wills; and it is no improper way of speaking to say, that when a divine Person displays his glory, and therein confers a blessing upon men, that this is given, as when God is said to give himself to his people, when he promises to be a God to them: there is, indeed, in this mode of speaking, a discriminating act of favour confer'd on men, upon which account 'tis called a gift; but this does not militate against

the divinity of the Holy Ghost, though he is said to be given to them.

As for the other scripture, in which it is said, *God gave them the like gift, as he did to us*, meaning the Holy Ghost, that is plainly taken for the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, the conferring whereof is called, in the foregoing words, a being *baptised with the Holy Ghost*; as it is particularly explain'd in that scripture, refer'd to, in *Acts* x. 45, 46. where 'tis said, that *on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost*; what this gift is, we may learn from the following words, *They spake with tongues, and magnified God*.

Again, when 'tis said, in *Luke* xi. 13. that *your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; this is explain'd by another Evangelist, in *Matt.* vii. 11. where it is taken for good things in general, and so includes the graces of the Spirit, that accompany salvation, when 'tis said, your Father, that is in heaven, shall give *good things* to them that ask him; so that here the Spirit is taken for all those blessings which he bestows upon his people, in answer of prayer.

As for those scriptures before mention'd, in which the Spirit is said to be sent, either by the Father, or the Son, they are not, indeed, to be understood in the same sense, as when the Son is said to be sent in his human nature, appearing in the form of a servant, to fulfil the will of God; but when God is said to send his Spirit, the word is to be taken in a metaphorical sense; in which, sending imports as much as giving; and when the Spirit is said to be given, it has a peculiar reference to the grace which he was to bestow upon them. If we enquire into the reason of this metaphorical way of speaking, it may probably be this; that we may understand hereby that the Spirit, which was to produce these effects, was a divine Person, and that the effects themselves were subservient to those works which were perform'd; by which the personal glories of the Father and Son were demonstrated.

Again, when it is farther said by our Saviour, in *John* xvi. 14. that *the Spirit shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you*; this plainly intends the Spirit's applying to them those blessings which Christ had purchased by his blood, which tended to his glory; and still it signifies only the subserviency of the Spirit to the Son, in working, as the application of redemption tends

Objections against the Deity of the HOLY GHOST answer'd. 201

tends to render the purchase thereof effectual, to answer its designed end.

As to the next scripture, before mention'd, in *John xvi. 13.* where *the Spirit* is said *not to speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*; this does not argue, in the least, that the Spirit receives what he communicates, as dependent on the Father, for the knowledge of those things he is to impart; or that he has *Ideas* impress'd on his mind, as creatures are said to have; for that is inconsistent with what has been before proved from scripture, *viz. That the Spirit knoweth the deep things of God, even as the spirit of a man knoweth the things of a man*; or, as an intelligent being, is conscious of his own thoughts, or actions, not by information, but by an immediate internal perception; the sense therefore of this text is this, that the Spirit shall communicate no other doctrines, or give no other laws, but what Christ had before given in the gospel, or that what he revealeth, is the same that Christ had given them ground to expect: Accordingly, it is so far from militating against the Spirit's divinity, that it proves the harmony and consent of what is suggested by one divine Person, with what had been before deliver'd by another; and as to the mode of expression here used, concerning the Spirit's speaking what he had heard, this is spoken after the manner of men, and is no more inconsistent with his divine omniscience, or the independence thereof, than when God is said, in other scriptures, to know things by searching them, or, as it were, by enquiry, as hath been before observ'd, in considering omniscience, as attributed to the Holy Ghost. These, and such-like expressions, by which God is represented, by words, accommodated to our usual way of speaking, when applied to men, are to be understood, notwithstanding, in a way agreeable to the divine perfections, by abstracting from them every thing that argues the least imperfection in him, when applied to the Holy Ghost; as when some expressions, agreeable to human modes of speaking, are elsewhere used, with a particular application to the Father, without detracting from his divine glory.

Again, when it is objected, that the Spirit hath a distinct mind from God, as when it is said, *God knoweth the mind of the Spirit*; and, as though he were represented as engaged in an act of worship, he is, in the following words, de-

scribed, as *praying, or making intercession for us, according to the will of God*; as, in *Rom. viii. 26, 27.* 'tis plain, that, by the *mind of the Spirit*, we are to understand those secret desires in prayer, which are wrought in believers by the Spirit, when they want words to express them; instead of which, they address themselves to God, as it is said, *with groanings that cannot be uttered*, which are from the Spirit, as the Author of these secret desires, which are only known to the heart-searching God, who knows the meaning of them, what it is we want, in which respect, this is called the mind of the Spirit, as the Author thereof, though it is subjectively our own mind or desires, which we want words to express; and when the Spirit is said to make intercession for us, it implies nothing else but his enabling us, whether in more or less proper modes of speaking, to plead with God for our selves.

Lastly, As to those expressions, by which the Spirit is represented, as *quenched, or extinguished*, these are to be understood in the same sense as when by a metonymy, as before mentioned, the gifts of the Spirit are put for the Spirit; as when those extraordinary gifts were first promised, they were led to expect that they should be *baptised with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*, that is, they should have the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost confer'd upon them, which were to be signified by the emblem of *fiery tongues, that sat on them*, in *Acts ii. 3.* the reason of which emblem might probably be this; that, as a necessary qualification for their preaching the gospel, they should be filled with an holy flame of love to God, and zeal for his glory, as well as with the gift of tongues, by which they might communicate his mind to the world; this privilege, which they had received, the Apostle exhorts them not to forfeit, abuse, or provoke the Holy Ghost to take from them, which is called a quenching the Spirit; therefore this metaphorical way of speaking, accommodated hereunto, must not be supposed to be inconsistent with his divinity.

I shall conclude with some inferences, which more especially respect the practical improvement of the doctrine of the Trinity. And,

1. We may take occasion, from hence, to observe the difference that there is between natural and reveal'd religion; as the former respects the knowledge of God

so far, as it may be attained without the help of divine revelation, and that worship, which the heathen, who have nothing else to guide them but the light of nature, are obliged to give to the divine Being; the latter, which is founded on scripture, contains a display of the personal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is necessary to be known and believed, as being the foundation of all reveal'd religion; so that the sum of Christianity consists in our subjection to, and adoring the Godhead, as subsisting in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. As this doctrine is eminently display'd in the work of our redemption, it is necessary for us to consider how it is accommodated to, and demonstrated by all the branches thereof. The price that was given, by our great Redeemer, has a value put upon it, in proportion to the dignity of his Person, and lays a sure foundation for our hope of being accepted in the sight of God, on the account of his obedience and sacrifice, which was of infinite value: And the application of redemption being a work which the Spirit, who is a divine Person, has undertaken to perform, encourages us to expect that it shall be brought to perfection; so that they, who are the objects of redeeming love and sanctifying grace, shall, in the end, be compleatly saved.

3. As it is necessary for us to adore and magnify the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the hope which we have of this inestimable privilege in the gospel, so we must observe the distinct glory that is to be given to each of these divine Persons for this work; to the Father, in that whatever is done by the Mediator, to procure this privilege for us, is consider'd, in scripture, as taking its rise from him, *1 Cor. i. 30. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:* And whatever was done in the human nature, or by God incarnate; that is, in a peculiar manner, the work of the Son, and a revenue of glory is due to him for it, who gave his life a ransom for many, and herein express'd the highest instance of condescension, which is enhanced by the infinite dignity of his Person. Moreover, whatever work is perform'd in subserviency to the Mediator's glory, whereby the Spirit demonstrates his distinct personal glory, this gives us occasion to adore him, in all the displays of his power, in beginning,

carrying on, and compleating the work of grace in the souls of men.

4. As to what respects that fellowship, or communion, which believers have with the Father, Son, and Spirit, this depends on the account we have, in scripture, of the distinct methods, in which their personal glory is set forth therein: thus we have access to God the Father, through the mediation of the Son, by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, as the Apostle says, in *Eph. ii. 18. Through him we have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father;* and our hope of blessedness proceeds this way, as it is the gift of the Father, who has prepared an inheritance for us, the purchase of the Son, on whose death it is founded, and the work of the Holy Ghost, as bringing us to, and putting us into the possession of it.

5. This directs us as to the way of performing the great duty of self-dedication, to the Father, Son, and Spirit; to the Father, as our covenant God in Christ; to the Son, as the Mediator, Head, and Surety of this covenant; and to the Spirit, by whom we are made partakers of the blessings promised therein; in all these, and many other respects, we are to have a particular regard to the Persons in the Godhead, in such a way, as their personal glory is set forth in scripture.

6. Since the Father, Son and Spirit, are one, tho' we distinguish them as Persons, yet we must consider them as having the same divine perfections, the same divine understanding and will, lest, while we give glory to each of the Persons in the Godhead, we should suppose that there are more Gods than one; therefore, tho' the Person of the Father is distinct from that of the Son and the Holy Ghost, we are not to suppose the power, wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, or any other divine perfections, belong, in a more or less proper sense, to one Person than another.

7. This doctrine is of use to direct us how we are to address our selves to God in prayer: thus, when therein we call him our Father, we are not to consider him in the same sense, as when he is represented as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we address our selves to him, as the Author of our being, the God of all grace, and the Fountain of blessedness; in which respect, the Son and the Holy Ghost are not to be excluded, especially unless we consider him

as our Father in Christ, and so express our faith, with respect to his distinct personality, from that of the Son and the Spirit. And tho' only one divine Person be particularly mention'd in prayer, the blessed Trinity is to be adored; or whatever personal glory we ascribe to one, as subsisting distinctly from the other, we must, notwithstanding, consider the Father, Son, and Spirit, as the one only living and true God.

Thus we have gone through this great and important subject, and therein have taken occasion, particularly, to insist on the chief matters in controversy relating to the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, and consider'd the various methods taken to oppose it, both by the *Socinians* and *Arians*, and endeavour'd, not only to defend the deity of our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, by enquiring into the sense of those many scriptures, in which our faith therein is founded, but to answer the most material objections that are brought against it; and our enlarging more on it, than we shall do on several following *Answers*, cannot be reckon'd a needless work, inasmuch as a great deal hath been written in opposition to it, whereby the faith of some has not only been shaken, but overthrown. I would never attempt to speak of this doctrine, or of any of the divine perfections, without being sensible of the difficulty of the subject, it being such as is not to be comprehended by a finite mind. I hope nothing will appear to have been suggested inconsistent with the essential, or personal glory of the Father, Son, or Spirit; and it may reasonably be expected that there should be allowances made for great defects, since 'tis but a little of God that can be known by us; therefore, when we pretend to speak concerning him, it will not be thought strange if we give occasion to any to say, what we have the greatest reason to acknowledge, that, in many instances, we cannot order our words, by reason of darkness.

QUEST. XII. *What are the decrees of God?*

ANSW. God's decrees are the wise, free and holy acts of the counsel of his will; whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably

fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass in time; especially concerning angels and men.

QUEST. XIII. *What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men?*

ANSW. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his meer love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory, and, in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof; and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth, or withholdeth favour, as he pleaseth) hath passed by, and fore-ordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

HAVING consider'd the perfections of the divine nature, and the personal glories of the Father, Son, and Spirit, the next thing to be insisted on is, what God has purposed to do from eternity, or does, or will do, in pursuance thereof; the former we call his decrees; the latter, the execution of them: the object of his decree is whatever comes to pass, which is the most large and comprehensive sense of his purpose; but whereas his determinations, in a particular manner, respect angels and men, or the intelligent part of the creation, and more especially the eternal happiness of some, or the display of his righteous judgments against others; in these respects, they being taken in a more limited sense, are called, as relating to the former, *Election*, and, with respect to the latter, *Reprobation*, which is the subject-matter of these two *Answers*. And, before we proceed to insist on this sublime and difficult subject, it may not be inexpedient for us to premise some things concerning it in general.

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis well known that there is no doctrine, contain'd in scripture, which is more contested than this, which lies before us; and 'tis not only denied by some, but treated with the utmost dislike or detestation, and that to such a degree, that we must either wholly forbear to mention it in publick discourses, or writings, or else must be liable to the hard fate of being censured by those who will not do that justice to the argument, to consider what may be advanced in defence thereof, as though it were to be taken for granted that we are maintaining a doctrine that is not only indefensible, but injurious to mankind, and subversive of all religion.

2. If there be any who give just occasion to these prejudices, by the methods which they have used in explaining, as well as the weakness of their arguments in defending it, or by laying themselves open to those popular objections, which are usually brought against it, we cannot but conclude that they are highly to blame; and therefore we are far from approving of any unguarded expressions, which are to be met with in some writings, whereby a stumbling-block is laid in the way of those who are disposed to make men offenders for a word, rather than to judge impartially of the main drift of their discourse; 'tis to be owned, that this has done dis-service to the cause, which might have been better defended.

3. If these prejudices against this doctrine are ill grounded, and the objections only founded on the popular cry, by which it is endeavour'd to be run down, and condemn'd with reproach and censure; and if persons know not, nor desire to know what may be said in defence thereof, or how such-like objections may be answer'd, the disgust and opposition is both unreasonable and uncharitable, and contains a capricious resolution not to be undeceived, and consequently renders the person, thus prejudiced, highly culpable in the sight of God, especially if there be any ground to conclude that his cause is therein maintain'd.

4. Let it be farther consider'd, that it is not a new doctrine, or such as was altogether unheard of in the world before; nor has it been only defended by the more ignorant or licentious part of mankind, or those who have been bold and presumptuous in affirming that for truth, which they had not duly weighed, or been convinced of, from the strongest

evidence. Whether it be as ancient as scripture, and, indeed, founded upon it, we shall leave others to judge, when we have consider'd what may be said from it in defence thereof.

5. It was generally asserted, and publicly owned, in most of the confessions of faith of the reformed churches in the last age, and, in particular, in the church of *England*, as contained in one of the Articles thereof, and there is no apparent ambiguity in the words themselves, however, some have endeavour'd, of late, to strain the sense thereof, and put such a meaning on them, as is very different from the writings of those who compiled them, which might serve as a comment on them.

And to this we may add, that it was maintain'd by far the greatest number of divines, in their publick discourses and writings, in the last *Century*, how much soever the contrary doctrines are maintain'd at this day: However, we do not insist on this, as a proof of the truth thereof, as though it needed to be supported by numbers of advocates for it, or were founded thereon; nor do we suppose, that, when it has been most strenuously, and almost universally defended, there were not, at the same time, others who opposed it. This I only mention, that I may, if possible, remove those prejudices that are inconsistent with persons judging impartially of it.

Since we are considering the head of prejudices against this doctrine, we think it necessary to add, that we shall endeavour to vindicate it, from the reproach that is generally cast on it, by those who suppose that it cannot be defended, without asserting God to be the Author of sin, or supposing him to be severe, cruel, and unjust to his creatures, as some conclude we represent him to be, by unjust consequences deduced from it. We are far from asserting, as will hereafter appear, that God, from all eternity, purposed to damn a great part of the world, as the result of his meer sovereign will, without the foresight of sin, which would render them liable to that condemnation.

Moreover, we shall endeavour to make it appear, in opposition to the calumnies of some, that the decree of God does not destroy, or take away, the liberty of man's will, with respect to things within its own sphere; or that, consider'd in it self, it don't lay a natural necessity on him,

to rush into inevitable damnation, as though the destruction of sinners were only to be resolved into the divine purpose, and not their own wickedness; in considering which, we shall maintain, that the decree of God does not lay any force on the will of man, nor preclude the means of grace, as ordain'd by him, for the salvation of them that do, or shall hereafter, believe unto life everlasting; nor does it obstruct the preaching of the gospel, and therein proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, to those who set under the sound thereof, as an ordinance for their faith.

And inasmuch as many are prejudiced against this doctrine, as being influenced by that popular out-cry, which is made by some, as though it were of a very pernicious tendency, either, on the one hand, to lead men to presumption, as giving occasion to persons to conclude, that they may be saved, as being elected, though they live as they list; or, on the other hand, that it leads to despair, as supposing, that if there be such a decree, as that of reprobation, they must necessarily be included in it, and, by this means, instead of promoting holiness of life, it is inconsistent therewith. If we cannot maintain this doctrine, without giving just ground for such exceptions, we shall not only think our labour lost, but condemn it, as pernicious and unscriptural, as much as they do, as it must of necessity be, if it cannot be defended from such-like exceptions, which, I hope, we shall be able to do, and, at the same time, make it appear, that it is not only consistent with, but a very great motive and inducement to practical godliness; and, if this can be made to appear, the greatest part of the censorious prejudices, that are entertain'd against it, will be removed, and persons will be better able to judge whether truth lies on that side of the question, which we shall endeavour to defend, or the contrary.

I could not but premise these things in our entrance on this subject, as being sensible that such-like reproaches, as these we have mention'd, are brought by many, without duly weighing whether they are well grounded or no; so that this doctrine is often opposed, in such a way of reasoning, that the premises, as well as the conclusions drawn from them, are rather their own than ours; or, at least, if some *Ideas* thereof may be found in the writings, or taken from the unguarded expressions, which some, who

have defended this doctrine, have made use of; yet they have appear'd in such a dress, that even they, who are supposed to have advanced them, would have disowned and rejected them. If persons, who are in another way of thinking, resolve not to lay aside these misrepresentations, it plainly appears that they are not disposed to lay open to conviction, and then all attempts to defend this doctrine will be to no purpose, the preventing whereof has render'd these prefatory cautions needful.

We shall only add, to what has been said, some general rules, by which we desire that the truth, either of this or the opposite doctrine, may be judged of.

1. If we do not confirm what we assert, by proofs taken from scripture, let it not be received; but if we do, whatever may be said of our method of managing this controversy, the greatest deference ought to be paid to the sacred oracles: But since 'tis very common for persons to answer the arguments taken from one scripture, by producing other scriptures, which seem to assert the contrary, as desirous to shift sides in the dispute, and put us upon solving the difficulties which they suppose to be contain'd in them, though this is not to be declined, yet a more direct answer must be given before the doctrine itself is overthrown. Whether our explication of those scriptures, on which our faith therein is founded, be just, we shall leave others to judge; and also whether the sense we give of other scriptures, that are brought as objections against it, be not equally probable with that of those that bring them, which is all that need be insisted on in such cases.

2. Let that doctrine be received, and the contrary rejected, on which side of the question soever it lies, that is most agreeable to the divine perfections, and explains those scriptures, brought in defence of it, most consistently therewith; which is a fair proposal, and such as ought not only to be applied to this particular head of doctrine, but to the whole of religion, as founded on scripture, which is far from overthrowing the divine glory, the advancement whereof is the great end of it.

3. Let that doctrine be rejected, as inconsistent with it self, and not worthy to be believed or embraced, whether it be ours, or the contrary thereunto, that shall detract from the harmony of the divine perfections, or pretend to set up, or plead for one, and, at the same time,

militate against the glory of another; and I desire nothing more than that our whole method of reasoning on this subject may be tried by these rules, and be deem'd true or false, agreeably to what is contain'd therein.

In considering this subject, relating to the Decrees of God, as in the two *Answers*, which we are explaining, we shall proceed in the following method; and shew,

I. What we are to understand, by God's fore-ordaining whatever comes to pass, according to the counsel of his own will, wherein we shall compare the decree, with the execution thereof, and observe how one exactly answers to the other, and is to be a rule for our judging concerning it.

II. We shall prove the truth of that proposition, that God hath fore-ordained whatever shall come to pass, either in time, or to eternity.

III. We shall then particularly consider intelligent creatures, such as angels and men, and that both good and bad, with respect to their present or future state, as the objects of God's eternal decree or purpose, and so shall proceed to speak concerning the decree of election, and reprobation, as contain'd in the latter of these *Answers*.

IV. We shall lay down some propositions concerning each of these, tending to explain and prove them, and that more especially as to what respects the election and reprobation of men.

V. We shall consider the properties thereof, and how the divine perfections are display'd therein, and endeavour to make it appear, in various instances, that the account we shall give thereof is agreeable thereunto, as well as founded on scripture.

VI. We shall enquire whether the contrary doctrine, defended by those who deny election and reprobation, be not derogatory to, and subversive of the divine perfections, or, at least, inconsistent with the harmony thereof; or whether it doth not, in many respects, make God altogether such a one as our selves.

VII. We shall endeavour to prove that their reasoning from scripture, who main-

tain the contrary doctrine, is not sufficiently conclusive; and that the sense they give of those scriptures, generally brought to support it, does not so well agree with the divine perfections, as it ought to do, but that they may be explain'd in a different way, more consistent therewith.

VIII. We shall endeavour to answer the most material objections that are usually brought against the doctrine that we are maintaining. And,

IX. Shew how it is practically to be improved by us, to the glory of God, and our spiritual good and advantage.

I. What we are to understand by God's fore-ordaining whatever comes to pass, according to the counsel of his own will.

1. By God's fore-ordaining whatever comes to pass, we do not understand barely his fore-knowledge of all things, that are, or shall be done in time, and to eternity, although this be included in, and inseparably connected with his eternal purpose, since no one can purpose to act without the fore-knowledge thereof, yet more than this is certainly contain'd therein; therefore,

2. God's pre-determining, or fore-ordaining whatsoever comes to pass, includes not only an act of the divine understanding, but an act of his sovereign will: It is not only his knowing what shall come to pass, but his determining, by his own agency, or efficiency, what he will produce in time, or to eternity. Accordingly, some call the decrees of God his eternal providence, and the execution thereof his actual providence; by the former, he determines what he will do; by the latter, he brings his determinations to pass, or effects what he before designed to do. It follows therefore,

3. That God's fore-ordaining whatsoever shall come to pass, is vastly different from his bringing things to pass; the one is an internal act of his will; the other, an external act of his almighty power: He fore-ordain'd that they should come to pass, and therefore, till then, they are consider'd as future; though this determination necessarily secures the event, unless we suppose it possible for his eternal purpose to be defeated, which is disagreeable to the divine perfections, as will farther appear under some following *Heads*. And, on the other hand, when we consider him, as bringing all things

to pass, or producing them by his power, this renders what was before future, present. With respect to the former, he decrees what shall be; and, with respect to the latter, his decree takes effect, and is executed accordingly.

They who treat of this matter, generally consider things, either as possible or future; things are said to be possible, with respect to the power of God, as every thing that he can do is possible to be done, though some things, which he could have done, he will never do. As for instance: He could have made more worlds, had he pleased; or have produced more men upon earth, or more species of creatures; or have given a greater degree of perfection to creatures, than he has done, or will do; for it is certain, that he never acted to the utmost of his power, accordingly he could have done many things that he will never do; and those things are said to be possible, but not future.

Moreover, things future are render'd so, by the will of God, or his having fore-ordained, or determined to produce them; this is what we call the decree of God, which respects the event, or determines whatever shall come to pass.

We are now to consider what we are to understand by God's fore-ordaining all things, according to the counsel of his will; which is a mode of speaking used in scripture, in *Eph. i. 11. Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

1. We are not hereby to understand that the decrees of God are the result of deliberation, or his debating matters within himself, as reasoning in his own mind about the expediency, or in expediency of things, or calling in the advice of others, as creatures are said to do, when acting with counsel; for he must not be supposed to determine things in such a way, for that would argue an imperfection in the divine mind; *With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the paths of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding.*^c But,

2. It implies, that his decrees are infinitely wise; as what is done with counsel is said, according to human modes of speaking, to be done advisedly, in opposition to its being done rashly, or with precipitation; accordingly all the works of God are done with wisdom, therefore

all his purposes and determinations to do what is done in time, are infinitely wise, which, according to our way of speaking, is called the counsel of his will: thus it is said, *He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.*^d

We are now to consider the object of God's decree: This, as has been before observed, is every thing that has, or shall come to pass, and it may be consider'd in different respects. There are some things which he has determined to effect, namely, such as are the objects of his power; or all things, which have a natural or moral goodness in them, which are becoming an infinitely holy God to produce; and this includes in it every thing but sin, which God does not produce, it not being the object of power; nevertheless, this must be supposed to be committed by his permission, and therefore it is the consequence of his decree to permit, though not, as other things, of his decree to effect; it is one thing to suffer sin to be committed in the world, and another thing to be the author of it. But this we shall have occasion to enlarge on, under a following *Head*.

II. We shall now proceed to prove the truth of what is laid down in this *Answer*, namely, that God hath fore-ordained whatever comes to pass; this will evidently appear, if we consider the five following propositions in their due connection.

1. Nothing comes to pass by chance, with respect to God, but by the direction of his providence, which we are bound to assert against the *Deists*, who speak of God as though he were not the Governor of the world. This cannot be denied by any, who think, with any degree of modesty, concerning, or pay a due deference to the divine perfections, since God may as well be denied to be the Creator as the Governor of the world,

2. It follows from hence, that nothing is done without the divine influence, or permission. The former (as was before observed) respects things that are good, which are the effects of his power; the latter, sin. That nothing comes to pass without the divine influence, or permission, is evident; for if any thing came to pass, which is the object of power, without the divine influence, then the creature would be said to exist, or act independently on the power of God; and, if so, then it would follow, that it

^c *Isai. xl. 14.*

^d *Chap. xxviii. 29.*

208 Arguments to prove that God fore-ordain'd all Things.

would exist, or act necessarily; but necessary existence is a perfection appropriate to God.

As to what respects the latter, namely, sin's being committed by divine permission, it is evident, that if it might be committed without the divine permission, it could not be restrain'd by God; and to suppose that he could not hinder the commission of sin, is to suppose that sin might proceed to the greatest height, without any possible check or controul, which would argue a great defect in the divine government of the world, as it is also contrary to daily experience, as well as scripture. Certainly he who sets bounds to the sea, and says to its proud waves, *Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther*, he must be supposed to set bounds to the corrupt passions of wicked men: thus the Psalmist says, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*^a.

Notwithstanding this does not argue his approbation of sin, or that he is the author of it; since it is one thing to suffer, or not to hinder, and another thing to be the author of any thing: Thus it is said, *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence*^x, that is, I did not restrain thee from doing them, as I could have done; so it is said, that, *in times past, he suffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways*^y.

3. God never acts, or suffers any thing to be done, but he knows, before-hand, what he will do or suffer; this an intelligent creature, acting as such, is said to do, therefore it must not be denied of him, who is omniscient, and infinitely wise: He who knows all things that others will do, cannot but know what he himself will do, or what others will do, by the interposure of his providence, or what he will suffer to be done, before it is acted.

4. Whatever God does, and consequently knows before-hand that he will do it, that he must be supposed to have before determined to do: This must be allowed, or else it argues him defective in wisdom; as no wise man acts precipitantly, or without judgment, much less must the wise God be supposed to do so; concerning whom it is said, that *all his ways are judgment*^z.

5. It therefore appears, even to a demonstration, that God before determined, or fore-ordained, whatever comes to pass, which was the thing to be proved.

And inasmuch as he never began to determine, as he never began to exist, or as he never was without resolution what he would do; therefore it is evident, that he fore-ordain'd, from eternity, whatever should come to pass, either in time, or to eternity.

It farther appears, that God fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, otherwise he did not determine to create all things before he gave being to them; and then it could not be said, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all*^a. There are, indeed, many admirable discoveries of wisdom, as well as power, in the effects produced; but to suppose that all this was done without fore-thought, or that there was no eternal purpose relating thereunto, this would be such a reflection on the glory of this perfection, as is inconsistent with the *Idea* of a God. Moreover, if herein he designed his own glory, as he certainly did, since every intelligent Being designs some end, and the highest and most excellent end must be designed by a God of infinite wisdom; and, if he did all this for his own glory, then it must be allow'd, that it was the result of an eternal purpose; all which, I am perswaded, will not be denied by those on the other side of the question, who defend their own cause with any measure of judgment.

To this we may farther add, that to deny that God fore-ordained whatever comes to pass, is, in effect, to deny a providence, or, at least, that God governs the world in such a way, as that what he does therein was pre-concerted. And herein we expect to meet with no opposition from any but the *Deists*, or those who deny a God; and if it be taken for granted that there is a providence, or that God is the Governor of the world, we cannot but conclude from hence, that all the displays of his glory therein are the result of his eternal purpose. This is also agreeable to what is said concerning him, that *he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*^b; the meaning of which is not barely this, (which is a great truth) that he acts without controul, inasmuch as his power is infinite, but that all he does is pursuant to his will; and, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, if we suppose that the divine power and will are so inseparably con-

^a Psal. lxxvi. 10.

^z Psal. l. 21.

^y Acts xiv. 16.

^b Deut. xxxiii. 4.

^a Psal. civ. 24.

^x Dan. iv. 35.

ned, that he cannot be said to produce any thing, but by the word of his power; or when he willeth that any thing should come to pass, it is not an inefficacious will, as ours is, for want of power, to effect what we would have done; therefore for God to will the present existence of things, is to effect them, which seems to be the reason of that mode of speaking, which was used when he produced all things, at first he said; Let them exist in that form, or perfection, which he had before designed to give them, and the effect immediately followed.

Hitherto, I presume, our argument will not be much contested; for the main thing in controversy is what relates to the divine determination respecting intelligent creatures, which will be consider'd under a following *Head*: What I have hitherto attempted to prove is, the proposition in general, namely, that whatever God brings to pass, or is the effect of power, is the result of his determinate purpose. And herein, I think, I have carefully distinguished between God's will to effect, and his will to permit; but that will be farther explain'd, when we speak of the decrees of God, with a particular application to angels and men, under the *Head* of Election.

Having endeavour'd to prove that God hath fore-ordain'd whatever comes to pass, we shall lay down the following propositions relating to his end and design in all his purposes, together with the nature of things, as coming to pass pursuant thereunto, and the method in which we are to conceive of the decree, when compared with the execution thereof.

1. God cannot design any thing, in his eternal purpose, as the highest end, but his own glory, which is here assign'd, as the end of his decrees. As this is the principal motive, or reason, inducing him to produce whatever comes to pass; so it must be consider'd as the end of his purpose relating thereunto: This is very evident; for since the divine glory is the most excellent of all things, he cannot, as an infinitely wise God, design any thing short of it, as the great motive or inducement for him to act; therefore, whatever lower ends are designed by him, they are all resolved into this as the principal, to wit, the advancement of his divine perfections. Though God designs his own glory as the highest end, yet he has purposed not only that this should be

brought about, by means conducive thereunto, but that there should be a suberviency of one thing to another, all which are the objects of his decree, as well as the highest end, namely, his own glory. As, for instance, he determines that the life and health of man shall be maintain'd by the use of proper means and medicine, or that grace shall be wrought instrumentally by those means, which he has ordain'd, in order thereunto: thus his purpose respects the end and means, together with the connection that there is between them.

2. According to the natural order of things, the divine purpose is antecedent to the execution thereof; therefore it seems very absurd to distinguish the decree of God, as some do, into antecedent and consequent, one going before the use of means, the other following, of which more hereafter: It is certain, that every intelligent being first determines to act, and then executes his determinations, so that nothing can be more absurd than to say, that a person determines to do a thing, which is already done; therefore we conclude, that God first decreed what shall come to pass, and then brings it to pass: Accordingly he first determined to create the world, and then created it; he first determined to bestow the means of grace on men, and to render them effectual to the salvation of all who shall be saved, and then he does this accordingly; so, with respect to his judicial actings, he first determined, by a permissive decree, not to prevent the commission of sin, though infinitely opposite to his holiness, and then, knowing the consequence of this permissive decree, or that men, through the mutability or corruption of their nature, would rebel against him, he determined to punish sin after it should be committed. Thus the decree of God is, in all respects, antecedent to the execution of it, or his eternal providence, as his decrees are sometimes called, is antecedent to, and the ground and reason of his actual providence.

3. Though the purpose of God be before the execution thereof, yet the execution of it is first known by us; and so it is by this that we are to judge of his decree and purpose, which is altogether secret, with respect to us, till he reveals it; therefore we first observe the discoveries thereof, as contain'd in his word, or made visible in his actual providence,

^c Gen. i. 3, 6, 9, &c.

210 *The Purposes of God are free, wise, and holy.*

and from thence we infer his eternal purpose relating thereunto. Every thing that is first in the order of nature, is not first with respect to the order of our knowing it: thus the cause is before the effect, but the effect is often known before the cause; the sun is, in the order of nature, before the enlightening the world by it; but we first see the light, and then we know there is a sun, which is the fountain thereof: or, to illustrate it by another similitude, which comes nearer the matter before us; A legislator determines first to make a law, which determination is antecedent to the making, and that to the promulgation of it, whereby his subjects come to the knowledge thereof, and act in conformity thereunto; but, according to our method of judging concerning it, we must first know that there is such a law, and from thence we conclude that there was a purpose relating to it, in him that gave it: thus we conclude, that though the decree of God be the ground and reason of the execution thereof, yet we know that there was such a decree by its execution, or, at least, by some other way designed to discover this to us.

These things being duly consider'd, may obviate an objection, which is no other than a misrepresentation of the doctrine we are maintaining, as though we asserted, that our conduct of life, and the judgment we are to pass concerning our selves, relating to our hope of future blessedness, were to be principally, if not altogether regulated, by God's secret purpose or decree, as though we were first to consider him as determining the event, that is, as having chosen or rejected us, and, from this supposition, to encourage our selves to attend upon the means of grace; or otherwise that we should take occasion to neglect them: since it is a preposterous thing for a man, who considers himself as reprobated, to attend on any of those means, which are ordain'd for salvation.

What has been said, under the foregoing *Heads*, is sufficient to take away the force of this objection; but this will be more particularly consider'd, when we come to answer several objections against the doctrine of election: Therefore all I shall add at present is, that since our conduct and hope is to be govern'd by the appearances of things, and not by God's secret purpose relating to the event thereof, we are to act as those who have

not, nor can have, any knowledge of what is decreed, with relation thereunto, till it is evinced by the execution thereof; or, at least, those graces wrought in us, which are the objects of God's purpose, as well as our future blessedness; and our right to one is to be judged of by the other.

This leads us to consider the properties of these decrees of God, as mentioned in the former of the *Answers* we are now considering; in which it is said, they are *wise, free, and holy*. This is very evident, from the wisdom, sovereignty, and holiness, which appear in the execution of them; for whatever perfections are demonstrated in the dispensations of providence, or grace, these God designed to glorify in his eternal purpose; therefore if his works, in time, are wise, free, sovereign and holy, his decree, with respect thereunto, which is fulfilled thereby, must be said to be so likewise. These things we shall have occasion to speak more particularly to, under a following *Head*, when we consider the properties of election, and particularly that it is wise, sovereign, and holy; I shall therefore, at present, only add, that whatever perfections belong to the nature of God, they are demonstrated by his works, since he cannot act unbecoming himself; for that would give occasion to the world to deny him to be infinitely perfect, that is, to be God. If we pass a judgment on creatures by what they do, and so determine him to be a wise man, who acts wisely, or a holy man, who acts holily, or a free and sovereign agent, who acts without constraint, certainly the same must be said of the divine Majesty; and consequently since whatever he does has the marks of infinite wisdom, holiness, and sovereignty, impress'd upon it, it is evident that these properties, or perfections, belong to all his purposes. If all *his works* are performed *in wisdom*, as the Psalmist observes^d, then we have reason to admire that wisdom which appears, from hence, to be contained in all his purposes relating thereunto, as the Apostle doth^e; *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! If he be righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works^f*; and therein demonstrates a divine sovereignty, as acting without any obligation, or constraint laid upon him to bestow the fa-

^d Psal. civ. 24.

^e Rom. xi. 33.

^f Psal. cxlv. 17.

vours he confers on mankind; then we must certainly conclude, that his eternal purpose, which is executed hereby, is free and sovereign. This leads us to consider,

III. That intelligent creatures, such as angels and men, with respect to their present or future state, are the objects of God's eternal decree, or purpose, which is generally called *Predestination*; and this, as it relates to the happiness of some, or misery of others, is distinguished into election or reprobation, which is a very awful subject, and ought never to be thought of, or mention'd, but with the utmost caution and reverence, lest we speak those things that are not right concerning God, and thereby dishonour him, or give just occasion to any to deny or reproach this doctrine, as though it were not founded on scripture.

Hitherto we have consider'd the purpose of God, as including in it all things future, as the objects thereof; and now we are to speak of it in particular, as it relates to angels and men. When we confine the objects of God's purpose to those things that come to pass, which have no dependence on the free will of angels or men, we do not meet with much opposition from those, who are, in other respects, in the contrary scheme of doctrine; for most of them, who are masters of their own argument, and consider what may be allowed without weakening their cause, do not deny that God fore-ordained whatever comes to pass, nor that he did this from all eternity, if we except what respects the actions of free agents. Thus they will grant that God, from all eternity, determined to create the world, and then to govern it, and to give laws to men, as the rule of government, and a free will, or power, to yield obedience thereunto: But when we consider mens free actions, as the objects of a divine decree, and the final state of men, as being determined by it, here we are like to meet with the greatest opposition, and therefore must endeavour to maintain our ground in the following part of this argument.

The decree of God, respecting intelligent creatures, is to be consider'd as containing in it two branches, namely, Election and Reprobation: The former of which is contained in those words, that God, out of his mere love for the praise of his glorious grace, hath elected some

to glory in Christ, and also to the means thereof; and as for Reprobation, that is described in the following words; That, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, he hath passed by, and fore-ordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be, for their sin, inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice. Both these are to be consider'd; and,

First, What respects the doctrine of election. To elect, or choose, according to the common use, or acceptation of the word, signifies the taking a small number out of a greater, or a part out of the whole; and this is applied, either to things or persons.

(1.) To things. As when a person has a great many things to choose out of, he sets aside some of them for his own use, and rejects the others, as refuse, that he will have nothing to do with.

(2.) To persons. As when a king chooses, out of his subjects, some whom he will advance to great honours; or when a master chooses, out of a number of servants offer'd to him, one, or more, whom he will employ in his service; this, from the nature of the thing, implies, that all are not chosen, but only a part, in which there is a discrimination, or a difference put between one and another.

But we are more particularly to consider the meaning of the word *Election*, as we find it in scripture, wherein it is used in several senses.

To elect, or choose, according to the acceptation of the word, does not connote the particular thing that a person is chosen to, but that is to be understood by what is farther added to determine the sense thereof; as sometimes we read of persons being chosen to partake of some privileges, short of salvation; at other times, of their being chosen to salvation; sometimes it is to be understood as signifying their being chosen to things of a lower nature, at other times their being chosen to perform those duties, and exercise those graces that accompany salvation; and we may, very easily, understand the sense of it by the context.

Again, it is sometimes taken for the execution of God's purpose, or for his actual providence, making choice of persons to fulfil his pleasure, in their various capacities; at other times, as we are here to understand it; for his fixing his love upon his people, and purposing to bring them to glory, making choice of some out of the rest of mankind, as the
monu-

212 Election, how frequently understood in Scripture.

monuments of his discriminating grace; we have instances of all these senses of the word in scripture; and,

1. It is sometimes taken for God's actual separation of persons, for some peculiar instances of service, which is a branch of his providential dispensation in time: thus we sometimes read, in scripture, of persons being chosen, or set apart, by God, to an office, and that either civil or sacred: Thus, upon the occasion of *Saul's* being made king, by God's special appointment, *Samuel* says, *See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen*^s; so it is said elsewhere, *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfold; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance*ⁿ.

It also signifies his actual appointment of some persons to perform some sacred office: thus 'tis said, concerning the *Levites*, that *the Lord had chosen them to carry the ark, and to minister unto him*ⁱ; and our Saviour says, to his disciples, *Have not I chosen you*, namely, to be my disciples, and as such to be employ'd in preaching the gospel, *and one of you is a devil*^k?

2. It is sometimes taken for God's providential designation of a people, to be made partakers of those external privileges of the covenant of grace, which belong to them as a church, which, as such, is the peculiar object of the divine regard: thus the people of *Israel* are said to have been chosen, or separated, from the world, to enjoy the external blessings of the covenant of grace, as *Moses* tells them, *Because the Lord loved your fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them*^l; and elsewhere, *Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*^m. And, in many other places in the Old Testament, the word *Election* is taken in this sense, though something more than this seems to be included in some particular scriptures in the prophetick writings, in which the *Jews* are described, as God's chosen people, as we shall endeavour to shew under a following *Head*.

3. It also signifies God's bestowing special grace, on some who are highly favoured by him, above others, as having called, or set them apart for himself, to have communion with him, to bear a

testimony to him, and to be employ'd in eminent service, for his name and glory in the world. Thus it seems to be taken, in *1 Cor. i. 26, 27.* where the Apostle speaks of their *calling*, which imports some special privileges, that they were made partakers of, as the objects of divine power and grace, to whom Christ was *made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*; which therefore signifies the powerful, internal, effectual call, and not barely the external call of the gospel, as appears by the foregoing and following *Verses*ⁿ; and they, whose calling he speaks of, are said to be chosen; *You see your calling, how that not many wise men, &c. are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world, &c.* so that to be chosen, and effectually called there, seem to import the same thing.

And sometimes it is taken, for some peculiar excellency, which one Christian has above another, as that hospitable, or publick-spirited person, to whom the Apostle *John* directs his second epistle, is called by him, *The elect lady*^o, as an excellent person is sometimes stiled a choice person.

But, though the word is taken, in scripture, in these various senses above mention'd, yet it is not confined to any, or all of them; for we shall endeavour to make it appear, that it is often taken, in scripture, as it is express'd in this *Answer*; for God's having fore-ordained particular persons, as monuments of his special love, to be made partakers of grace here, and glory hereafter, as it is stiled, their being chosen to eternal life, and the means thereof. This is what we shall endeavour to prove, and accordingly shall consider the objects thereof, namely, angels and men, and that it is only a part of mankind that is chosen to salvation, to wit, that remnant which shall be eventually saved, and that these are chosen to the means thereof, as well as the end; and how this is said to be in Christ.

The objects of election are *Angels* and *Men*. A few words may be said concerning the election of angels, as being particularly mention'd in this *Answer*; we have not, indeed, much deliver'd concerning this matter in scripture, though the Apostle calls those who remain in their state of holiness and happiness, in which they were created, *elect*

^s 1 Sam. x. 24.

ⁿ Chap. vii. 6, 7.

^l Psal. lxxviii. 70, 71.

^m Ver. 24. compared with 30.

ⁱ 1 Chron. xv. 2.

^o Ver. 1.

^k John vi. 70.

^l Deut. iv. 37.

angels^a. But, had we no mention of their election in scripture, their being confirmed in their present state of blessedness, must, from the foregoing method of reasoning, be supposed to be the result of a divine purpose, or the execution of a decree relating thereunto; though there is this difference between their election, and that of men, in that the latter are chosen unto salvation, which the angels are not subjects capable of, inasmuch as they were never in a lost, undone state; neither are they said to be chosen in Christ, as men are.

But we shall proceed, to that which more immediately concerns us, to consider Men as the objects of election. This is variously expressed in scripture; sometimes it is called, their being *appointed to attain salvation*, or being *ordained to eternal life*, or their names being *written in the book of life*; and it is also called, *the purpose of God, according to election*, or his having *loved them before the foundation of the world*, or his having *predestinated* them, (who have been blest'd with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ) *unto the adoption of children*, by him, according to the good pleasure of his will. That the scriptures speak of persons as elect, and that this is always represented as a great instance of divine favour and goodness, is not denied: But the main thing in controversy is, whether this relates to the purpose of God, or his providence; and whether it respects particular persons, or the church of God in general, as distinguished from the world; and, if it be supposed to relate to particular persons, how these are consider'd in God's purpose, or what is the order and reason of his determination to save them.

That election sometimes respects the disposing providence of God, in time, has been already consider'd, and some particular instances thereof, in scripture, refer'd to; but when they, on the other side of the question, maintain, that this is the only, or principal sense in which it is used therein, we must take leave to differ from them. There is a late writer^b, who sometimes misrepresents, and, at other times, opposes this doctrine, with more assurance and insult, than the strength of his reasoning will well allow of; and his performance on this *Head*, and others, that have some affinity with it, is concluded, by many of his ad-

mirers, to be unanswerable; and the sense that he has given of several scriptures therein, as well as in his *Paraphrase* on the *New Testament*, in which he studiously endeavours to explain every text, in conformity to his own scheme; has tended to prejudice many in favour thereof; and therefore we shall take occasion sometimes to consider what he advances against the doctrine that we are maintaining; and particularly, as to this *Head* of election, he supposes, "1. That the election, mention'd in scripture, is not of particular persons, but only that of churches and nations, or their being chosen to the enjoyment of the means of grace, rather than a certainty of their being saved by those means; that it does not contain any absolute assurance of their salvation, or of any such grace, as shall infallibly, and without any possibility of frustration, procure their salvation. 2. That the election to salvation, mention'd in scripture, is only conditional, upon our perseverance in a life of holiness; and he attempts to prove, that election, in the *Old Testament*, belongs not to the righteous and obedient persons only, but the whole nation of the *Jews*, good and bad; and that, in the *New Testament*, it is applied to those who embrace the Christian faith, without any regard had to their eternal happiness." These things ought to be particularly consider'd, and therefore we shall endeavour to prove,

1. That though *Election* oftentimes, in the *Old Testament*, respects the church of the *Jews*, as enjoying the external means of grace, yet it does not sufficiently appear that it is never to be taken in any other sense; especially when there are some of those privileges which accompany salvation, mention'd in the context, and applied to some of them, who are thus described; or when there are some promises made to them, which respect more than the external means of grace; therefore if there were but one scripture that is to be taken in this sense, it would be a sufficient answer to the universal negative, in which 'tis supposed, that the *Old Testament* never intends by it any privilege, but such as is external, and has no immediate reference to salvation. Here I might refer to some places in the evangelical prophecy of *Isaiah*, which are not foreign to our purpose; as when it is said, *Thou Israel art my ser-*

^a 1 Tim. v. 21. Election, pag 36, 37, &c.

^b Dr. Whitby, in his Discourse of Election, &c.

^c See his Discourse concerning

214 *The Word Election, how used in the Old Testament.*

vant, Jacob, whom I have chosen; and I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; that this respects more than the continuance of their political and religious state, as enjoying the external means of grace, seems to be imply'd in those promises that are made to them, in the following words, which not only speak of their deliverance from captivity, after they had continued some time therein, but their being made partakers of God's special love, which had an immediate reference to their salvation: thus 'tis said, in the following *Verse*, *Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismay'd, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*; and elsewhere God, speaking to the *Jews*, says, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins*^u; and, *Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end*^x.

There are also many other promises, which seem to import a great deal more than the external privileges of the covenant of grace, which many very excellent Christians have applied to themselves, as supposing that they contain those blessings which have a more immediate reference to salvation; and it would detract very much from the spirituality and usefulness of such-like scriptures, to say that they have no relation to us, as having nothing to do with the *Jewish* nation, to whom these promises were made.

Object. To this it may be objected, that these promises are directed to the church of the *Jews*, as a chosen people; and therefore to suppose that there were a number elected out of them to eternal salvation, is to extend the sense of the word beyond the design of the context, to destroy the determinate sense thereof, and to suppose an election out of an election.

Ans. 1. Since the word *Election* denotes persons being chosen to enjoy the external means of grace, and to attain salvation by and under them, it may, without any impropriety of expression, be applied in these different senses, in the same text; so that *Israel* may be described as a chosen people in the former sense, and yet there might be a number elected out of them, who were chosen to eternal life, to

whom this promise of salvation more especially belong'd, who are distinguished from the general body of the *Jewish* nation, who are called, in the other sense, God's elect; as when it is said, *I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord; the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, &c.*^v. So that as *Israel* were an elect people, chosen out of the world to enjoy the external privileges confer'd upon them, as a church, which they are supposed to have mis-improved, for which they were to be carried captive into *Babylon*; there was a remnant chosen out of them to be made partakers of the blessings that accompany salvation, such as are here promised; these are not consider'd as a church, govern'd by distinct laws, from those that *Israel* was govern'd by; and therefore not as a church selected out of that church, but as a number of people among them whom God had kept faithful, as having chosen them to enjoy better privileges than those which they had, as a professing people; or as a number elected to be made partakers of special grace, out of those which had been made partakers of common grace, which they had miserably abused, and were punished for it.

2. Our Saviour, speaking concerning the final destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Roman* army, and a great time of distress that should ensue hereupon, tells them, in *Matt. xxiv. 22.* that those days should be shorten'd *for the elect's sake*, that is, those who were chosen to eternal life, and accordingly should be converted to the Christian faith, not from among the Heathen, but out of the *Jewish* nation; for it is to them that he more particularly directs his discourse, forewarning them of this desolating judgment; and he advises them to pray that their flight be not on the sabbath-day, *Ver. 20.* intimating thereby, that that nation deem'd it unlawful to defend themselves from the assaults of an enemy on the sabbath-day, tho' their immediate death would be the consequence thereof; therefore this advice was suited to the temper of the *Jews*, and none else: No people in the world, except them, entertain'd this superstitious opinion concerning the prohibition of self-defence on the sabbath-day; from whence it may therefore be infer'd, that our Saviour speaks of them in particular, and

^u *Isai. xlii. 8, 9.*

^x *Chap. xliii. 25.*

^v *Chap. xlv. 17.*

^v *Zephani. iii. 12, 13.*

not of the Christians, which were amongst them; upon which account it seems probable, that these are not intended by the *elect*, namely, that small number for whose sake those days of distress and tribulation were to be shorten'd^b; therefore there were an elect people, whom God had a peculiar regard to, who should afterwards be converted to Christianity, namely, a number elected to eternal life out of that people, who were elected to the external privileges of the covenant of grace. And this farther appears from what follows, where our Saviour speaks concerning *false Christs, and false prophets, that should shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect*^c. Now it cannot be supposed of them that are called false Christs, that they would attempt to pervert the Christians, by pretending to be the Messiah; for that would be impracticable, inasmuch as they did not expect any other to come with that character since our Saviour; whereas the *Jews* did, and many of them were perverted thereby to their own ruin; but it is intimated here, that the elect people, which was among them, should be kept from being deceived by them, inasmuch as they were chosen to obtain salvation, and therefore should believe in Christ by the gospel.

There is also another scripture, which seems to give countenance hereunto, where the Apostle shews, that God had not cast away his people^d, to wit, the *Jews*, that is, he had not rejected the whole nation, but had made a reserve of some who were the objects of his special love, as chosen to salvation; and these are called, *A remnant according to the election of grace*^e; and this seems still more plain, from what follows^f, *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, that is, righteousness and life, which they sought after, as it were, by the works of the law, which, as is mention'd in the foregoing Verse, is inconsistent with the attaining it by grace, but the election, that is, the elect among that people have obtained it; for they sought after it another way, and the rest were blinded, that is, the other part of the Jewish nation, which were not interested in this privilege, were left to the blindness of their own minds, which was their ruin.*

To this let me add one scripture more^g, where the Apostle, speaking concerning

the nation of the *Jews*, distinguishes between the natural and the spiritual seed of Abraham, when he says, *All are not Israel that are of Israel, q. d. there was a remnant according to the election of grace, which were chosen to eternal life out of that people, who were, in other respects, chosen to be made partakers of the external privileges that belong'd to them, as God's peculiar people.* The sum of this argument is, that though, 'tis true, there are some scriptures that speak of the church of the *Jews*; as separated from the world, by the peculiar hand of divine providence, and favour'd with the external means of grace, yet there are others in which they are said to be chosen to partake of privileges of an higher nature, even those which accompany salvation; therefore *Election*, in the *Old Testament*, sometimes signifies God's purpose, relating to the salvation of his people.

2. We shall proceed to consider how *Election* is taken in the *New Testament*, in opposition to those who suppose that it is there used only to signify God's bringing persons to be members of the Christian church, as being instructed in the doctrines relating thereunto by the Apostles^h: The principal ground of this opinion is, because sometimes whole churches are said to be elected, as the Apostle speaks of the church at *Babylon*, as elected together with them, to whom he directs his Epistleⁱ; by which it is supposed that nothing is intended, but that they were both of them Christian churches. If this be the sense of every scripture in the *New Testament*, that treats of election, then we must not pretend that the doctrine we are maintaining is founded on it: But, on the other hand, we think we have reason to conclude, that when we meet with the word in the *New Testament*, it is to be understood, in most places, for God's eternal purpose relating to the salvation of his people. I will not pretend to prove an universal negative, viz. that it is never taken otherwise, but shall refer to some scriptures, in which it is plainly understood so, and endeavour to defend this sense thereof.

The first scripture that we shall refer to, is in *Eph. i. 4.* *He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; and, in Ver. 5. he speaks of their being predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ; that this*

^b See the contrary opinion defended by Whitby in loc.

^c Rom. ix. 6; 7.

^d See Whitby's Discourse, &c. Pag. 40.

^e Ver. 24.

^f Rom. xi. 2.

^g Ver. 5.

^h Ver. 7.

ⁱ 1 Pet. i. 2: compared with Chap. v. 13.

respects

respects not the external dispensation of God's providence, in constituting them a Christian church, or giving them the knowledge of those doctrines, on which 'twas founded; but their being chosen to salvation and grace, as the means thereof, according to God's eternal purpose, will very evidently appear from the context, if we consider that they who are thus chosen, are called *faithful in Christ Jesus*, which implies much more than barely to be in him by external profession; they are farther described, as *blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ*, in *Ver. 3.* or blessed with all those blessings which respect heavenly things; grace, which they had in possession, and glory, which they had in expectation; and they are farther described, as having *obtained redemption through the blood of Christ, and forgiveness of sins*; and all this is said to be done, *according to the riches of his grace, and the good pleasure of his will, who worketh all things after the counsel thereof*; and certainly all this must contain much more than the external dispensation of providence relating to this privilege, which they enjoy'd, as a church of Christ.

Again, in *1 Thess. i. 4.* the Apostle says concerning them, to whom he writes, that *he knew their election of God*; that this is to be understood of their election to eternal life, is very evident; and, indeed, he explains it in this sense, when he says, *God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ^k*; the gospel is consider'd, as the means of their attaining that salvation, which they are said to be chosen to; so that their election contains more than their professed subjection thereunto, as a church of Christ: Besides, the Apostle gives those marks and evidences of this matter, which plainly discover that it is their election to salvation that he intends; accordingly he speaks of their *work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ*, and of *the gospel's coming not in word only, but also in power^l*; by which he means not the power that was exerted in working miracles, for that would be no evidence of their being a church, or of their adhering to the doctrines that were confirmed thereby, since every one, who saw miracles wrought, did not believe; therefore

he means, that, by the powerful internal influence of the Holy Ghost, they were persuaded to become followers of the Apostles, and the Lord, and were examples to others, and publick spirited, in endeavouring to propagate the gospel in the world. Certainly this argues that they were effectually called by the grace of God, and so proves that they were chosen to be made partakers of this grace, and of that salvation, that is the consequence thereof.

There is another scripture, in which it is very plain that the Apostle speaks of election to eternal life, inasmuch as there are several privileges connected with it, which the Christian church, as such, cannot lay claim to: thus, in *Rom. viii. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* Now if justification, or freedom from condemnation, accompanied with their being effectually called here, which shall end in their being glorified hereafter, be the result of their election, as in *Ver. 30.* then certainly this includes in it more than the external privileges of the covenant of grace, which all who adhere to the Christian faith are possessed of, and consequently 'tis an election to salvation that the Apostle here intends.

Object. It is objected, that it is more than probable, when we find, as we sometimes do, whole churches stiled elect in the *New Testament*, that some among them were hypocrites; particularly those to whom the Apostle *Peter* writes, who were converted from Judaism to Christianity, whom he calls *Elect*, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father; notwithstanding they had some in communion with them, concerning whom it might be said, that they had only a name to live, but yet were dead; and he advises them, *to lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envies, and evil speaking, and, as new born babes, to receive the word, if so be they had tasted that the Lord is gracious^m*; which makes it more than probable, that there were some among them who had not, in reality, experienced the grace of God; so when he says, that there should be *false teachers among them*, whose practice should be as vile as their doctrine, and that *many amongst them should follow their pernicious waysⁿ*, it seems to argue that the whole church he writes to, were not chosen to salvation; therefore their election only signifies their being chosen to enjoy the privi-

^k 1 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

^l 1 Thess. i. 3, 5.

^m 1 Pet. ii. 1.

ⁿ 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

leges, which they had, as a professing society of Christians.

Ans. It is certain that there was a very considerable number among them who were not only Christians in name, but they were very eminent for the exercise of those graces, which evinced their election to eternal life; and particularly he says concerning them, *Whom having not seen, ye love; and in whom believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*^a; which agrees very well with the other character given them of their *being elect, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*^b; therefore the only thing that seems to affect our argument is, that this character did not belong to every individual. But, supposing this should be allowed, might not the church be here described, as chosen to salvation, inasmuch as the far greater number of them were so? Nothing is more common, in scripture, than for a whole body of men to be denominated from the greatest part of them, whether their character be good or bad: Thus when the greatest part of the *Jewish* church were revolted from God, and guilty of the most notorious crimes, they are described as though their apostacy had been universal, *They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders*^c; whereas it is certain, there were some who had not apostatiz'd: Some of them were slander'd and reproach'd for the sake of God, and therefore were not included in the number of them that walked with slanders, though their number was very small; as God says by the prophet *Ezekiel*, *I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none*^d; whereas at that time, in which the people were most degenerate, there were found some who *sigh'd and cry'd for all the abominations that were done in the midst of them*^e. So, on the other hand, when the greater number of them kept their integrity, and walk'd before God in holiness of life, the whole church is thus characterised, *I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness; Israel was holiness to the Lord*^f; whereas 'tis certain, that, at that time, there were a great many who rebel'd, murmur'd, and revolted from God,

and were plagued for their iniquities; yet because the greater number of them were upright and sincere, this character is given in general terms, as if there had been no exception. And the prophet look'd back to some age of the church, in which a great number of them were faithful; and therefore he speaks of the people in general, at that time, as such, and accordingly calls them, *The faithful city*^g; and the prophet *Jeremiah* calls them, *The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine Gold*^h; yet there never was a time when there were none among them that rebel'd against God. Therefore may not this be supposed concerning the first gospel-churches that were planted by the Apostles; and accordingly, when they are stiled *Elect*, to whom the Apostle *Peter* writesⁱ, as well as the church at *Babylon*, why may not this be supposed to signify, that the greatest part of them were really sanctified, and therefore chosen to sanctification? And consequently their character, as elect, does not barely signify their being chosen to be made partakers of the external privileges of the gospel. We might also consider, that it is very agreeable to our common mode of speaking, to denominate a city, or a kingdom, from the greater number thereof, whether we call them a rich, or a wise, or a valiant people, we never suppose there are no exceptions to this character; therefore why may we not, in this instance, conclude, that the Apostle *Peter*, when he describes this church as elected, intends their election to salvation?

Thus we have endeavour'd to prove, that election, in scripture, is not always taken, in the *Old Testament*, for the external privileges, which the *Jewish* nation had, as a church; nor in the *New Testament* for those, who belong'd to the churches, namely, such as profess'd the Christian faith. And probably that learned author, before mention'd, was apprehensive that this observation of his would not hold universally true; and therefore he has another provisory objection against the doctrine of particular election of persons to eternal life, and says, as *Arminius* and his contemporaries before did, that all those scriptures, which speak of this doctrine, contain nothing more than God's conditional purpose, that if a person believes, he shall be saved. It is necessary for us to consider what may be said in answer hereunto; but inasmuch

^a 1 Pet. i. 8, 9.

^b Ver. 2.

^c Jer. vi. 28.

^d Ezek. xxii. 30.

^e Chap. ix. 4.

^f Jer. ii. 2, 3.

^g Isai. i. 21.

^h Lam. iv. 2.

ⁱ 1 Pet. v. 13.

218 *How the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian Schemes differ.*

as we shall have occasion to speak to this when we consider the properties of election, under a following *Head*, we shall rather chuse to reserve it to that place, than be obliged to repeat what might be here said concerning it.

Thus having premised something concerning election in general, and the sense in which it is to be understood, in scripture, we shall briefly mention a matter in dispute, among divines, relating to the objects thereof, as they are consider'd in God's eternal purpose: And here we shall take notice of some different opinions relating thereunto, without making use of those scholastick modes of speaking, which render this subject much more difficult, than otherwise it would be; and shall take occasion to avoid and fence against those extreams, which have only had a tendency to prejudice persons against the doctrine in general.

The object of election is variously consider'd by divines, who treat of this subject.

1. There are some who, though they agree in the most material things in their defence of this doctrine, yet they are divided in their sentiments about some nice metaphysical speculations, relating to the manner how man is to be consider'd, as the object of Predestination: Accordingly some, who are generally stiled *Supralapsarians*, seem to proceed in this way of explaining it, namely, that God, from all eternity, design'd to glorify his divine perfections, in some objects out of himself, which he could not then be said to have done, inasmuch as they did not exist; and the perfections, which he design'd to glorify, were, more especially, his sovereignty and absolute dominion, as having a right to do what he will with the work of his hands; and also his goodness, whereby he would render himself the object of their delight; and, as a means conducive to this end, he design'd to create man an intelligent creature, in whom he might be glorified; and since a creature, as such, could not be the object of the display of his mercy, or justice, he farther design'd to permit man to fall into a state of sin and misery, that so,

when fallen, he might recover some out of that state, and leave others to perish in it; the former of which are said to be loved, the other hated; and when some extend the absoluteness of God's purpose, not only to election, but reprobation, and do not take care to guard their modes of speaking, as they ought to do, but conclude *Reprobation*, at least *Predamnation*, to be not an act of justice, but rather of sovereignty; they lay themselves open to exception, and give occasion to those, who oppose this doctrine, to conclude, that they represent God as delighting in the misery of his creatures, and with that view giving being to them. It is true, several, who have given into this way of thinking, have endeavour'd to extricate themselves out of this difficulty, and denied this, and other consequences of the like nature, which many have thought to be necessary deductions from this scheme, whether they have done this effectually, or no, may be judged of by those who are conversant in their writings^v. I cannot but profess my self to set a very high value on them in other respects, yet I am not bound to give into some nice speculations, contained in their method of treating this subject, which renders it exceptionable; particularly, I cannot approve of any thing advanced by them, which seems to represent God as purposing to create man, and then to suffer him to fall, as a means by which he designed to demonstrate the glory of his vindictive justice, which hath given occasion to many to entertain rooted prejudices against the doctrine of predestination, as though it necessarily involved in it this supposition, that God made man to damn him.

There are others, who are generally stiled *Sublapsarians*², who suppose, that God consider'd men as made and fallen, and then designed to glorify his grace in the recovery of those who were chosen, by him, to eternal life; and his justice in them, whom he designed to condemn, as a punishment for their sins, which he purposed not to hinder, and foreknew that they would commit; and he designed to glorify his sovereignty, in that one should be an object of grace,

^v See *Twiss. Vind. Gent. & de Predest.* and his *Riches of God's love*, against *Hord*; and also that part of the writings of some others, in which they treat of Predestination, viz. *Beza, Gomarus, Piscator, Maccovius, Rutherford, Whitaker, and Perkins*.

² Among these were *Bishop Davenant*, and other divines, who met in the synod of *Dort*; also *Calvin, P. Du Moulin, Turretin*, and, indeed, the greater number of those who have defended the doctrine of Predestination; and there are many others, who, when they treat of it, seem to wave the particular matter in controversy, as thinking it of no great importance, or that this doctrine may be as well defended, without confining themselves to certain modes of speaking, which have been the ground of many prejudices against it, whose prudence and conduct herein cannot be justly blamed.

rather

rather than another, whereas he might have left the whole world in that state of misery, into which he foresaw they would plunge themselves. That which is principally objected, by those who are in the other way of thinking, against this scheme, is, that the *Sublapsarians* suppose that God's creating men, and permitting them to fall, was not the object of his eternal purpose. But this they universally deny, and distinguish between God's purpose to create and suffer men to fall; and his purpose's being consider'd as a means to advance his sovereignty, grace, and justice, in which the principal difference between them consists. We shall enter no farther into this controversy, but shall only add, that whatever may be consider'd, in God's eternal purpose, as a means to bring about other ends, yet it seems evident, from the nature of the thing, that God cannot be said to choose men to salvation, but herein he must consider them as fallen; for as no one is a subject capable of salvation, but one who is fallen into a state of sin and misery; so when God purposed to save such, they could not be consider'd as to be created, or created and not fallen, but as sinners.

2. There are others who deny particular election of persons to eternal life, and explain those scriptures, which speak of it, in a very different way: These suppose, that God design'd, from all eternity, to create man, and foreknew that he would fall, and, that, pursuant to this eternal fore-knowledge, he design'd to give him sufficient means for his recovery, which, by the use of his free will, he might improve, or not, to the best purposes; and also, foreknowing who would improve, and who would reject, the means of grace, which he purposed to bestow, he determined, as the consequence thereof, to save some, and condemn others. This method of explaining God's eternal purpose is exceptionable, as will farther appear, in the methods we shall take, in prosecuting this subject, in two respects.

(1.) As they suppose that the salvation of men depends on their own conduct, or the right use of their free will, without giving the glory which is due to God, for that powerful, efficacious grace, which enables them to improve the means of grace, and brings them into a state of salvation.

(2.) As the result of the former, they suppose that nothing absolute is con-

tain'd in the decree of God, but his fore-knowledge, which is rather an act of his understanding than his will; and therefore it seems to militate against his sovereignty and grace, and, to make his decrees depend on some conditions, founded in the free-will of man, which, according to them, are not the object of a peremptory decree. Thus having consider'd intelligent creatures, and more particularly men, as the objects of predestination,

IV. We proceed to the farther proof and explication of this doctrine; and, in order thereto, shall insist on the following propositions.

1. That it is only a part of mankind that were chosen to salvation.

2. That they who were chosen to it, as the end, were also chosen to sanctification, as the means thereof; and,

3. That they were chosen in Christ, which propositions are contain'd in that part of this *Answer*; in which it is said, that God has chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof.

1. That some were chosen to salvation not the whole race of mankind, but only those that shall be eventually saved: That the whole world is not the object of election, appears from the known acceptance of the word, both in scripture, and in our common modes of speaking; since to choose, as has been before observed, is to take, prefer, or esteem, one thing before another, or to separate a part from the whole, for our own proper use, and what remains is treated with neglect and disregard: Accordingly it is not a proper way of speaking; to say that the whole is chosen; and therefore it follows, that if all mankind had been fore-ordain'd to eternal life, which God might have done if he had pleased, this would not have been called a purpose, according to election.

But there are other arguments more conclusive, than what results barely from the known sense of the word, which we shall proceed to consider, and therein make use of the same method of reasoning, which we observed, in proving that God fore-ordained whatever comes to pass, with a particular application thereof to the eternal state of believers. As we before observed, that the decree of God is to be judged of by the execution of it, in time; so it will appear, that those whom God, in his actual providence and grace, prepares for, and brings to

220 *They who were chosen to Salvation filed a Remnant.*

to glory, he also before designed for it. Were I only to treat of those particular points in controversy, between us and the *Pelagians*, I would first consider the method which God takes in saving his people, and prove that salvation is of grace, or that it is the effect of the power of God, and not to be ascribed to the free-will of man, as separate from the divine influence; and then I would proceed to speak concerning the decree of God relating hereunto, which might then, without much difficulty, be proved; but being obliged to pursue the same method in which things are laid down, in their respective connection, we must sometimes defer the more particular proof of some doctrines, on which our arguments depend, to a following *Head*, to avoid the repetition of things; therefore, inasmuch as the execution of God's decree, and his power and grace manifested therein, will be insisted on in some following *Answers*, we shall, at present, take this for granted, or shall speak but very briefly to it.

(1.) It appears that it is only a part of mankind that are chosen to be made partakers of grace and glory, inasmuch as these invaluable privileges are confer'd upon, or applied to no more than a part of mankind: If all shall not be saved, then all were not chosen to salvation; for we are not to suppose that God's purpose, relating hereunto, can be frustrated, or not take effect; or if there be a manifest display of discriminating grace in the execution of God's decree relating thereunto, there is, doubtless, a discrimination in his purpose, and that is what we call election. This farther appears from some scriptures, which represent those who are saved as a remnant: thus when the Apostle is speaking of God's casting away the greatest part of the *Jewish* nation, he says of some of them, notwithstanding, that *at this present time also there is a remnant, according to the election of grace*^a; that is, there are some among them who are brought to embrace the faith of the gospel, and to be made partakers of the privileges that accompany salvation: these are called a remnant; as when it is said, in *Rom. ix. 27.* *Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is no more than a remnant of them that shall be saved.* He doubtless speaks in this and other

scriptures, concerning the eternal salvation of those who are described as a remnant, according to the election of grace. Here it will be necessary for us to consider, that this *Remnant* signifies only a small part of the *Jewish* church, selected, by divine grace, out of that nation, of which the greater number were rejected by God; and that the salvation, here spoken of, is to be taken not for any temporal deliverance, but for that salvation which the believing *Jews* should be made partakers of in the gospel-day, when the rejection of the others had its full accomplishment. That this may appear, we shall not only compare this scripture with the context, but with that in *Hosea*, from whence it is taken: As to what respects the context, the Apostle, in *Ver. 2.* expresses his *great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart*, for the rejection of that nation in general, which they had brought upon themselves; but yet he encourages himself, in *Ver. 6.* with this thought, that *the word of God*, that is, the promise made to *Abraham* relating to his spiritual seed, who were given to expect greater blessings, than those which were contained in the external dispensation of the covenant of grace, should not *take none effect*, since, though the whole nation of the *Jews*, who were of *Israel*, that is, *Abraham's* natural seed, did not attain those privileges; yet a part of them, who are here called *Israel*, and elsewhere a remnant, chosen out of that nation, should be made partakers thereof; the former are call'd, *The children of the flesh*, in *Ver. 8.* the latter, by way of eminence, *The children of the promise*; these are stiled, in *Ver. 23, 24.* *The vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, to whom he designed to make known the riches of his glory*, namely, those whom he had called; not of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*, which he intends by that remnant, which were chosen out of each of them, for so the word properly signifies^b. And this sense is farther confirm'd, by the quotation out of the prophecy of *Hosea*, *Chap. i. 10.* compared with another taken out of the prophecy of *Isaiab*, *Chap. x. 22.* both which speak only of a remnant that shall be saved, when the righteous judgments of God were poured forth, on that nation in general; and the prophet *Hosea* adds another promise relating to them,

^a *Rom. xi. 5.*

^b *ἡ ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ ἐλέους, non solum ex judæis*; that is, those who are call'd from among the *Jews*, as distinguished from the rest of them that were rejected.

those who are call'd from among the *Jews*, as distinguished

which the Apostle takes notice of, namely, that *in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God*, which plainly respects this remnant; for he had before prophesied concerning the nation in general, *Ye are not*, that is, ye shall not be my people, and *I will not be your God*; so that here is a great salvation foretold, which they, among the *Jews*, should be made partakers of, who were fore-ordain'd to eternal life, when the rest were rejected.

Object. The prophet seems to speak, in this scripture, of a temporal salvation, inasmuch as it is said in the words immediately following, *Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel, be gather'd together, and shall appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land*, viz. of Babylon, *for great shall be the day of Jezreel*. Therefore this remnant, here spoken of, which should be called the sons of the living God, respects only such as should return out of captivity, and consequently not the election of a part, to wit, the believing *Jews*, to eternal life: for 'tis plain, that, when this prediction was fulfilled, they were to *appoint themselves one head*, or governor, namely, *Zerubbabel*, or some other, that should be at the head of affairs, and help forward their flourishing state, in, or after their return from captivity.

Answer. It seems very evident, that part of this prophecy, viz. Chap. iii. 5. respects the happiness of *Israel*, at that time, when *they should seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and should fear the Lord and his goodness, in the latter days*, therefore why may not this *Verse*, in Chap. i. in which 'tis said, that they shall be called the sons of the living God, also have its accomplishment in the gospel-day, when they should adhere to Christ, who is called, *David their King*. The only difficulty which affects this sense of the text is, its being said, that they shall return to their own land, under the conduct of a *Head*, or governor, whom they should *appoint over them*, which seems to favour the sense contain'd in the objection: But the sense of the words would be more plain, if we render the text, instead of [THEN] *And the children of Judah, &c.* as it is render'd in most translations, and is most agreeable to the sense of the Hebrew word^c. According to our tran-

slation, it seems to intimate, that the prophet is speaking of something mention'd in the foregoing *Verse*; and inasmuch as the latter respects their return from the captivity, therefore the former must do so; whereas if we put *and* instead of *then*, the meaning of both *Verses* together is this: There are two blessings which God promised, namely, that a part of the *Jewish* nation should be made partakers of the saving blessings of the covenant of grace, which was to have its accomplishment when they were brought to believe in Christ, by the gospel, or when this remnant, taken out from them, should be saved; and there is also another blessing promised to the whole nation, which should be confer'd upon them, when they return'd from the *Babylonish* captivity,

If it be objected, to this sense of the text, that their return from captivity is mention'd after that promise, of their being called the *sons of the living God*, therefore it cannot be supposed to relate to a providence that should happen before it. I need only reply to this, that it is very usual, in scripture, for the Holy Ghost, when speaking concerning the privileges which the church should be made partakers of, not to lay them down in the same order in which they were to be accomplished; and therefore, why may we not suppose, that this rule may be applied to this text? And accordingly the sense is this: The prophet had been speaking in the *tenth Verse*, of that great salvation, which this remnant of the *Jews*, converted to Christianity, should be made partakers of in the gospel-day; and then he obviates an objection, as though it should be said, How can this be, since the *Jews* are to be carried into captivity, and there broken, scatter'd, and, as it were, ruin'd! In answer to this, the prophet adds, that the *Jews* should not be destroy'd in the captivity, but should be deliver'd, and return to their own land, and so should remain a people, till this remnant was gather'd out of them, who were to be made partakers of these spiritual privileges under the gospel-dispensation, as mention'd in the foregoing words.

Thus having endeavour'd to prove, that this remnant, spoken of in *Rom. ix.* are such as should be made partakers of eternal salvation, we may now apply this to our present argument. If that salva-

tion, which this remnant was to be made partakers of, be the effect of divine power, as the Apostle says, in *Rom. ix. 16.* 'Tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy; and, if it be the gift of divine grace, as he says elsewhere, in *Eph. ii. 8.* By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God, then it follows from hence, that God design'd, before-hand, to give them these blessings; and if he design'd them only for this remnant, then it is not all, but a part of mankind, to wit, those that shall be eventually saved, that were chosen to salvation.

(2.) The doctrine of election may be farther prov'd, from God's having fore-known whom he will sanctify and save. It will be allowed, that God knows all things, and consequently that he knows all things that are future, and so not only those whom he has saved, but whom he will save. We need not prove that God fore-knew all things, for that is not denied by those who are on the other side of the question, or, at least, by very few of them; and, indeed, if this were not an undoubted truth, we could not depend on those predictions, which respect things that shall come to pass; and these not only such as are the effects of necessary causes, or things produced according to the common course, or laws of nature, but those which are contingent, or the result of the free-will of man, which have been foretold, and consequently were fore-known by God; and if it be allowed that he fore-knew whatever men would be, and do, let me farther add, that this fore-knowledge is not barely an act of the divine mind, taking a fore-view of, or observing what others will be, or do, without determining that his actual providence should interest it self therein; therefore it follows, that if he fore-knew the salvation of those who shall be eventually saved, he fore-knew what he would do for them, as a means conducive thereunto; and, if so, then he determined, before-hand, that he would bring them to glory; but this respects only a part of mankind, who were chosen by him to eternal life.

In this sense we are to understand those scriptures that set forth God's eternal purpose to save his people, as an act of fore-knowledge: thus, in *Rom. xi. 2.* God hath not cast away his people, whom he fore-knew, that is, he hath not cast them all away, but has reserved to him-

self a remnant, according to the election of grace. That he either had, or soon design'd, to cast away the greatest number of the Jewish nation, seems very plain, from several passages in this Chapter: thus, in *Verses 17, 19.* he speaks of some of the branches being broken off, and, *Ver. 22.* of God's severity, by which we are to understand his vindictive justice in this dispensation: But yet we are not to suppose, says the Apostle, that God has cast them all away, as in *Ver. 1.* and so he mentions himself, as an instance of the contrary, as though he should say, I am called, and sanctified, and chosen, though I am an Israelite.

Moreover, God's not casting away this remnant of the Israelites, being the result of his fore-knowledge, does not barely respect his knowing what they should be, or do, whom he had chosen to eternal life, for 'tis represented as a discriminating act of favour; whereas, in other respects, they, who are rejected by him, are as much the objects of his knowledge, as any others, since the omniscience of God is not the result of his will; but it is a perfection founded in his nature, and therefore not arbitrary, but necessary.

Again, the Apostle, in *1 Pet. i. 2.* speaks of some who were elected, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, unto obedience, &c. that is, not chosen, because of any obedience performed by them, which God fore-knew; for this is consider'd, as the result of his fore-knowledge, not the cause of it; and this word is yet farther explain'd in another place, where 'tis used, when the Apostle says, in *2 Tim. ii. 19.* The Lord knoweth them that are his. He had before been speaking of the faith of some, who professed the gospel, being overthrown; nevertheless, says he, that foundation of hope, which God has laid in the gospel, is not hereby shaken, but stands sure; the faithful shall not be overthrown, for the Lord knoweth them that are his, that is, he knows who are the objects of his love, who shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation; so that God's fore-knowledge, consider'd as a distinguishing privilege, is not to be understood barely of his knowing how men will behave themselves, and so, taking his measures from thence, as though he first knew what they would do, and then resolved to bestow his grace; but he knows whom he has set a part for himself, or design'd to save, and, with respect to them, his provi-

Election prov'd from GOD's giving the Means of Grace. 223

providence will influence their conduct, and prevent their apostacy.

God's knowledge, in scripture, is sometimes taken for his approving, or loving, those who are the objects thereof: thus he says unto Moses, in *Exod. xxxiii. 17. Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name*, where one expression explains the other, and so it imports a knowledge of approbation; and, on the other hand, when our Saviour says to some, in *Matt. vii. 23. I will profess unto you I never knew you*, 'tis not to be supposed that he did not know how they would behave themselves, or what they would do against his name and interest in the world; but *I never knew you*, that is, I never approved of you, and accordingly it follows, *Depart from me, ye that work iniquity*; and when it is said concerning knowledge, as applied to man, in *John xvii. 3. This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God*; no one supposes that a speculative knowledge of divine truths will give any one ground to conclude his right to eternal life, therefore to know God, is to love, to delight in him; and the same is applied, by the Apostle, to God's loving man, when he says, in *1 Cor. viii. 3. If any man love God, the same is known of him*, that is, beloved by him. Now if God's knowing his people signifies his loving them, then his fore-knowing them must signify his determining to do them good, and to bestow grace and glory upon them, which is the same as to choose them to eternal life: He fore-knew what he designed to confer upon them; for he *prepared a kingdom for them, from the foundation of the world^d*, which is the same with his having, from the beginning, chosen them to salvation.

Object. As all actions, perform'd by intelligent creatures, as such, suppose knowledge, so their determinations are the result of fore-knowledge, for the will follows the dictates of the understanding; therefore we must suppose God's fore-knowledge to be antecedent to, and the ground and reason of his determinations. This the Apostle seems to intimate, when he says, in *Rom. viii. 29. Whom he did fore-know, he did predestinate*, that is, he had a perfect knowledge of their future conduct, and therefore determined to save them.

Answ. I do not deny that, according to the nature of things, we first consider God as knowing, and then as willing:

But this does not hold good, with respect to his knowing things future; for we are not to suppose that he first knows that a thing shall come to pass, and then wills that it shall. 'Tis true, he first knows what he will do, and then does it; but, to speak of a knowledge in God, as conversant about the future state, or actions of his people, without considering them as connected with his power and providence, which is the immediate cause thereof, I cannot think consistent with the divine perfections.

As for this scripture, *Whom he did fore-know, them he did predestinate*, we are not to suppose, that the meaning is, that God fore-knew that they, whom he speaks of, would be conformed to the image of his Son, and then, as the result hereof, determined that they should; for their being conformed to Christ's image, consists in their exercising those graces which are agreeable to the temper and disposition of his children, or brethren, as they are here called; and this conformity to his image, is certainly the result of their being called: But their calling, as well as justification and glorification, is the consequence of their being fore-known; therefore God's fore-knowing here, must be taken in the same sense as 'tis in the scriptures, but now refer'd to; for his having loved them before the foundation of the world, or chosen them to enjoy those privileges, which are here mention'd.

(3.) It farther appears, that there is a number chosen out of the world to eternal life, from the means which God has ordain'd for the gathering a people out of it, to be made partakers of the blessings which he has reserved for them in heaven: This is what we generally call the means of grace; and from hence it appears, that there is a chosen people, whose advantage is designed hereby; for the making out of this argument, let it be consider'd,

1st. There always has been a number of persons, whom God, by his distinguishing providence, has separated from the world, who have enjoy'd the ordinances, or means of grace, and to whom the promises of eternal life have been made. We don't say that these are all chosen to eternal life; but it appears, from the design of providence herein, that there have been some, among them, who were ordain'd to eternal life. If God gives the means of grace to the church, it is an

^d Matt. xxv. 34.

224 GOD'S loving Jacob, and hating Esau, explain'd.

evident token that some are designed to have grace bestowed upon them, and consequently to be brought to glory.

2^{dly}. They who have been favour'd with these means of grace, have had some peculiar marks of the divine regard to them. Thus we read, in the early ages of the world, of the distinction between those, who had the special presence of God among them, and others, who were deprived of it; as *Cain* is said to go out from the presence of the Lord^e, as one who, together with his posterity, were deprived of the means of grace, and also of God's covenant, in which he promised to be a God to some, from which privilege others were excluded: thus he was called the *God of Shem*^f, and afterwards, of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*^g, whose descendents were hereby given to expect the ordinances and means of grace, and many instances of that special grace, which a part of them should be made partakers of: And would he have made this provision, for a peculiar people, in so discriminating a way, if there had not been a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, whom he designed to manifest himself to here, and to bring to glory hereafter? No, he would have neglected, or over-look'd them, as he did the world; whereas both they and their seed had the promises of the covenant of grace made to them; which argues, that there was a remnant among them, whom God designed hereby to bring into a state of grace and salvation, and, in this respect, they are said to be the objects of divine love.

This leads us to consider the meaning of that text, which is generally insisted on, as a very plain proof of this doctrine, in *Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13. The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand; not of works, but of him that calleth: It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* Here is an express mention of the purpose of God, according to election, and *Jacob* is, pursuant thereunto, said to be the object of divine love; for the understanding of which, let us consider the sense that is given of it, by those on the other side of the question, and how far it may be allowed of, and what there is in the words to prove this doctrine, and wherein our sense of them differs from theirs.

It is supposed, by those who deny particular election, that *Jacob* and *Esau* are not here consider'd in a personal capacity, but that the Apostle speaks of their respective descendents, as referring to two divine predictions; in one of which^h, God told *Rebekah*, before her two sons were born, that *two nations were in her womb; and the elder, that is, the posterity of Esau, should serve the younger, namely, that of Jacob*; and, in the otherⁱ, he says, *I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains waste*; so that if, in both these scriptures, refer'd to by the Apostle, nothing else be intended but the difference that should be put between them, as to the external dispensations of providence; or that *Jacob's* family, in future ages, should be in a more flourishing state than that of *Esau*, we must not suppose that he designed thereby to represent them as chosen to, or excluded from eternal life.

This seems a very plausible sense of the text; but yet the Apostle's words may very well be reconciled with those two scriptures, cited to enervate the force of the argument taken from it; and, at the same time, it will not follow from thence, that there is no reference had to the doctrine of eternal election therein. Therefore,

1. We will not deny, when it is said, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated*, that their respective descendents were intended in this prediction, yet it will not follow from hence, that *Jacob* and *Esau*, personally consider'd, were not also included. Whoever reads their history, in the book of *Genesis*, will evidently find in one the marks and characters of a person chosen to eternal life; whereas, in the other, we have no account of any regard which he express'd to God or religion, therefore he appears to have been rejected; yet,

2. So far as it respects the posterity of *Jacob* and *Esau*, we are not to suppose that God's having loved the one, and rejected the other, implies nothing else, but that *Jacob's* posterity had a better country allotted for them, or exceeded *Esau's*, in those secular advantages, or honours, which were confer'd upon them. This seems to be the principal sense, which they, on the other side of the question, give of the Apostle's words; when, comparing them with those of the prophet *Malachi*, who, speaking concerning *Esau's* being hated, explains it,

^e Gen. iv. 16.

^f Chap. ix. 26.

^g Exod. iii. 6.

^h Gen. xxv. 23.

ⁱ Mal. i. 2, 3.

GOD's loving Jacob, and hating Esau, farther explain'd. 225

as relating to *his land's being laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness*. This had been foretold by some other prophets^k, and had its accomplishment soon after the *Jews* were carried captive into *Babylon*, from which time they ceased to be a nation; but, certainly, though this be that particular instance of hatred, which the prophet *Malachi* refers to, yet there is more contained in the word, as applied to them by the Apostle *Paul*. 'Tis true, the prophet designs, in particular, to obviate an objection, which the *Jews* are represented, as making, against the divine dispensations towards them, as though they had not such an appearance of love, as he supposes them to have had, therefore they are brought in, as, speaking to this purpose: How can't thou say, that God has loved us, who have continued seventy years captives in *Babylon*, and, since our return from thence, have been exposed to many adverse dispensations of providence? The prophet's reply is to this effect: That, notwithstanding, they still remain'd a nation, and therefore were, in this respect, more the objects of the divine regard, than the posterity of *Esau* were, which is represented as hated, for they never returned unto their former state; or what attempts soever they made to recover it, they were all to no purpose. This the prophet alledges, as a sufficient answer to the *Jews* objection, in the same sense in which they understood the words, *Love* or *Hatred*; but, doubtless, more than this was contained in the prediction before *Jacob* and *Esau* were born, and in the Apostle's application of it, in the text before mentioned. If nothing were intended but outward prosperity, or their vying with each other in worldly grandeur, *Esau's* posterity, in this respect, might be concluded to have been preferable to *Jacob's*: thus when they are reckon'd, by their genealogies^l, they are many of them described as dukes and kings, who made a considerable figure in the world. When *Jacob's* posterity were few in number, and bond-men in the land of *Egypt*, and when the *Israelites* were carried captive into *Babylon*, the *Edomites* are represented, by the prophet, as looking on, and rejoicing in their destruction, as being, at that time, in all appearance, secure, and enjoying their former liberty.

Neither could this love or hatred sig-

nify nothing else but the descendants of *Jacob* being planted in a more fruitful soil; for there is little difference put between them, in this respect, in the patriarchal benediction pronounced by their father, who tells *Jacob*, that *God would give him the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine*; and to *Esau* he says, *Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above^m*; therefore, when one is described, in the prediction, as loved, and the other as hated, we are not to suppose, that outward prosperity on the one hand, or adversity on the other, are principally intended thereby, for that might be said of both of them by turns; therefore let me add,

3. That God's loving or hating, as applied to the posterity of *Jacob* or *Esau*, principally respects his determining to give or deny the external blessings of the covenant of grace, or the means of grace, and therewith many special tokens of his favour. In *Jacob's* line the church was established, out of which, as has been before observed, there was a remnant chosen, and brought to eternal life; how far this may be said of *Esau's*, is hard to determine.

Object. I. But to this it will be objected, that *Job* and his friends were of *Esau's* posterity, as is more than probable; but these were far from being rejected of God.

Answer. To this it may be reply'd, that a few single instances are not sufficient to overthrow the sense we have given of this divine oracle, since the rejection of *Esau's* posterity may take its denomination from the far greater number thereof, without including in it every individual, as is very agreeable to the sense of many scriptures. Moreover, we may consider, that these lived, as we have sufficient ground to conclude, before the seed of *Jacob* were increased, and advanced to be a distinct nation, as they were after their deliverance from the *Egyptian* bondage; as also before that idolatry which first overspread the land of *Chaldea*, in *Abraham's* time, had universally extended it self over the country of *Idumea*, where *Esau's* family was situate; so that it don't follow from hence, because this prediction did not take place in a very considerable degree, in the first descendents from him, that therefore it does not respect their rejection, as to what

^k Jer. xlix. 17, 18. Ezek. xxxv. 7. 9. Obad. Ver. 10. with 39.

^l Gen. xxxvi.

^m Chap. xxvii. 28. compared

concerns the spiritual privileges of that people afterwards. And, indeed, idolatry seems to have had some footing in the country where *Job* lived, even in his time, which gave him occasion to exculpate himself from the charge thereof, when he signifies, that *he had not beheld the sun when it shineth, or the moon walking in brightness, and his heart had not been secretly enticed, or his mouth kissed his hand*^a, alluding to some modes of worship, practised by idolaters in his day, who gave divine honour to the sun and moon; and, soon after his time, before *Israel* had taken possession of *Canaan*, there seems to have been an universal defection of the *Edomites* from the true religion, otherwise, doubtless, *Moses* might, without any difficulty, have got leave to have passed through their country, in his way to the land of *Canaan*, which he requested in a most friendly and obliging manner, but to no purpose^o, especially considering they had no reason to fear that they would do any thing against them in a hostile manner; therefore the unfriendly treatment they met with from them, proceeded from the same spring with that of the *Amalekites*, and other bordering nations, namely, they had all revolted from the God and religion of their father *Abraham*; so that this prediction seems to have been fulfilled, before the promise, respecting *Jacob's* posterity in any considerable degree, began to take place.

Having briefly consider'd this objection, we return to the argument, namely, that God's loving or hating, in this scripture, as it has a relation to the distinct nations that descended from *Jacob* and *Esau*, includes in it his determining to give or deny the external privileges of the covenant of grace, which we generally call the ordinances, or means of grace: These were the spiritual and more distinguishing instances of divine favour, which *Jacob* was given to expect, when he obtain'd the blessing. As for the double portion, or the greatest part of the paternal estate, that descended with it, together with the honour of having dominion over their brethren, or a right, (as it is probable they had) to act as civil magistrates in their respective families, these were all small things, if compared with those spiritual privileges, wherein God's love to *Jacob*, and his posterity, was principally express'd; it was this which is so often signified by God's being the

God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*: In other respects, *Esau* was blessed, as well as *Jacob*; for the Apostle, speaking concerning that part of *Isaac's* prediction, which respected the temporal advantage of their posterity, says, that he blessed *Jacob* and *Esau*, concerning things to come^p; yet *Esau* was rejected, as to what concerns the spiritual part of the blessing, which was his birth-right, that he is said to have despised^q; and, for this reason, he is stiled, by the Apostle, a *profane person*^r. If it had been only a temporal privilege that he contemn'd, it might have been a sin; but it could not then have been properly said to have been an instance of profaneness, for that has respect only to things sacred; therefore it evidently appears, that the blessings which *Esau* despised, and God had before designed to confer on *Jacob*, and his seed, as a peculiar instance of his love, were of a spiritual nature.

Object. 2. It will be farther objected, that men's enjoying the external privileges of the covenant of grace, has no immediate reference to their salvation, or election to it.

Ans. Since salvation is not to be attain'd, but by and under these means of grace, we must conclude, that whenever God bestows and continues them, to a church or nation, he has a farther view therein, namely, the calling some, by his grace, to partake of those privileges that accompany salvation. If there were no such blessings to be confer'd on the world, there would be no means of grace, and consequently no external dispensation of the covenant of grace, for it is absurd to suppose that any thing can be called a means, where all are excluded from the end which they refer to; therefore the sum of this argument is, that God had a peculiar love to the posterity of *Jacob*, and accordingly he designed to give them those privileges which were denied to others, namely, the means of grace, which he would not have done, had he not intended to make them effectual to the salvation of some of them; and this purpose, relating hereunto, is what is called election, which, though it be not applicable to all the seed of *Jacob*, for all, as the Apostle says elsewhere, are not *Israel* who are of *Israel*, yet, inasmuch as there was a remnant of them, to whom it was applied, they are that happy seed, who are represented, by the Apostle, as the objects of God's compassion, or *vessels unto honour, in whom he designed to make*

^a Job xxxi. 26, 27.^o Numb. xx. 14—21.^p Heb. xi. 20.^q Gen. xxv. 34.^r Heb. xii. 16.

known

Men are elected to Sanctification as well as Salvation. 227

known the riches of his glory, having, in this respect, afore prepared them unto glory^f.

Thus having consider'd that God has chosen a part of mankind to salvation, we may, without being charged with a vain curiosity, enquire whether this privilege belongs to the greater or smaller part of mankind, since the scripture goes before us in this matter. If we judge of the purpose of God by the execution thereof, it must be observ'd, that hitherto the number of those, who have been made partakers of the special privileges of the gospel, has been comparatively small; if we look back to those ages before our Saviour's incarnation, what a very inconsiderable proportion did *Israel* bear to the rest of the world, who were left in darkness and ignorance! And, after this, our Saviour observes, that *many were called*, in his time, *but few were chosen*^g; and he advises to *enter in at the strait gate*^h, by which he means the way to eternal life, concerning which he says, that *there are*, comparatively, *few who find it*. And when the gospel had a greater spread, and wonderful success attended the preaching thereof, by the Apostles, and many nations embraced the Christian faith, in the most flourishing ages of the church, the number of Christians, and much more of those who were converted, and effectually called, was comparatively small; whether the number of true believers shall be greater, when there is a greater spread of the gospel, and a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit, to render it more successful, as we hope and pray for that happy time, and that not altogether without scripture-warrant; I say, whether then the fewness of those who have hitherto been chosen and sanctified, shall not be compensated, by a far greater number, who shall live in that happy age of the church, it is not for us to be over curious in our enquiries about: However, we may determine this from scripture, that, in the great day, when all the elect shall be gather'd together, their number shall be exceeding great, if what the Apostle says refers to this matter, as some suppose it does, when he speaks of a *great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands*ⁱ. But

these things are no farther to be searched into, than as we may take occasion, from thence, to enquire whether we are of that number; and, if we are, we ought to bless God for his discriminating grace, which he has magnified therein. And this leads us to consider,

2. That they who are chosen to salvation, are also chosen to sanctification, as the means thereof: As the end and means are not to be separated in the execution of God's decree, so they are not to be separated in our conception of the decree itself; for since God brings none to glory, but in a way of holiness, the same he determined to do from all eternity, that is, to make his people holy, as well as happy; or first to give them faith and repentance, and then, the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.

There are many scriptures, in which the purpose of God, relating hereunto, is plainly intended; as when it is said, *He hath chosen us that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love*^j; and elsewhere the Apostle tells others, that *God had, from the beginning, chosen them unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*^k; and the Apostle James saith, that *God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*^l; and elsewhere the Apostle Paul speaks of persons being *predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*, which he explains of their being *called, justified, and glorified*^m; and it is also said, speaking of those who were converted under the Apostle Paul's ministry, *as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed*ⁿ; accordingly they were ordain'd to one as well as the other.

The argument, which seems very plainly contain'd in these, and such-like scriptures, is, that God's eternal purpose respects the grace that his people are made partakers of here, as well as the glory that they expect hereafter, which are inseparably connected; this cannot reasonably be denied by those who are not willing to give into the doctrine of election: But if the inseparable connection between faith and salvation be allowed, as having respect to the execution of God's purpose, it will be no difficult matter to prove that this was determined by him, or that his purpose respects faith, as well as salvation. Therefore the main thing in controversy between us is, whether this grace, that accompanies salvation, is

wrought

^f Rom. ix. 15, 21, 23.

^g Matt. xx. 16.

^h Chap. vii. 13, 14.

ⁱ Rev. vii. 9.

^j Eph. i. 4.

^k 2 Thess. ii. 13.

^l James ii. 5.

^m Rom. viii. 29.

ⁿ Acts xiii. 48.

228 Election to Grace, as well as Glory, farther consider'd.

wrought by the power of God, or whether it depends on the free-will of man. That which induces them to deny that God has chosen persons to faith, is this supposition; that that which is the result of man's free-will, cannot be the object of God's unchangeable purpose, and consequently that God has not chosen men to it. This is the hinge on which the whole controversy turns, and if the doctrine of special efficacious grace be maintain'd, all the prejudices against that of election would soon be removed; but this we must refer to its proper place, being obliged to insist on that subject in some following *Answers*^a; and, what may be farther consider'd, concerning the absoluteness of election, as one of the properties that belong to it, under a following *Head*, will add some strength to our present argument. All that we shall do, at present, shall be to defend our sense of the scriptures, but now refer'd to, to prove that election respects sanctification, as well as salvation; and that it does so is plain, from the first of them, in *Eph. i. 4.* which proves that holiness is the end of election, or the thing that persons are chosen to, as appears from the grammatical construction of the words; 'tis not said he has chosen us, consider'd as holy, and without blame, but that we should be holy^c; that which is plainly intended, as the result of election, cannot be the cause and reason of it.

As to what the Apostle says, in *2 Thess. ii. 13.* *God hath, from the beginning, chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*; that plainly intimates, that sanctification is the end of election; and therefore the principal answer that some give to it, which appears to be an evasion, is, that the Apostle does not speak of eternal election, because God is said to have done this from the beginning, that is, as one explains the words, from the beginning of the Apostle's preaching to them: But if we can prove that there is such a thing as a purpose to save, it will be no difficult matter to prove the eternity of the divine purpose; and this is not disagreeable to the sense, in which the words, *From the beginning*, are elsewhere used^f.

As for that other scripture, in *James ii. 5.* where 'tis said, *God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*; here the words, *That they may be*^g, (which are inserted by the

Apostle, in the scripture but now mention'd) may, without any strain on the sense thereof, be supplied, and so the meaning is, God hath chosen them, *that they might be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*: But if it will not be allow'd, that these words ought to be supplied, the sense is the same, as though they were, *q. d.* God has chosen the poor of this world, who are described as rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom; and so we distinguish between election's being founded upon faith, and faith's being a character, by which the elect are described; and, if faith be a character by which they are described, then he, who enabled them to believe, purposed to give them this grace, that is, he chose them to faith, as well as to be heirs of the kingdom.

As for that other text, in *Rom. viii. 29.* *He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son*; these words, *to be*, are supplied by our translators, as I apprehend they ought, for the reason but now mention'd, taken from the parallel scripture, in *Eph. i. 4.* But, to evade the force of the argument, to prove that we are predestinated to grace, as well as to glory, they, who deny this doctrine, give a very different turn to the sense of this text, as though the Apostle only intended hereby, that the persons, whom he speaks of, were predestinated to an afflicted state in this life, a state of persecution, in which they are said to be conformed to the image of Christ^h: But though 'tis true that believers are said to be made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, and, by consequence, are predestinated thereunto, yet that does not appear to be the sense of this text, as not well agreeing with the context; for the Apostle had been describing those, whom he speaks of, as loving God, and called according to his purpose, and then considers them as predestinated, to be conformed to the image of his Son, which must be meant of their being made partakers of those graces, in which their conformity to Christ consists, as well as in sufferings; and then he considers them, in the following *Verses*, as called, justified, and glorified; and all this is the result of their being predestinated.

As for that scripture, in *Acts xiii. 48.* *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*; their faith is here consider'd as the result of their being ordain'd to eternal

^a See Questions LXVII, LXVIII, LXXII, LXXV, LXXVI.
^g *ἵνα*.

^h Vid. *Grot.* in loc.

^c *ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἀγαθούς.*

^f See *Prov. viii. 23.*

life, or they are represented as predestinated to the means, as well as the end.

Object. 1. But it will be objected by some, that this is not agreeable to the sense of the *Greek* word here usedⁱ; partly, because it is not said they were fore-ordain'd to eternal life, but *ordain'd*; and the genuine sense thereof is, that they were disposed to eternal life, and consequently to faith, as the means thereof. And this is also taken in a different sense; some suppose that it imports a being disposed, by the providence of God, or set in order, or prepared for eternal life; others, agreeably to the exposition which *Socinus*, and some of his followers, give of the text, (which sense a late learned writer falls in with^k) understand the words, as signifying their having an internal disposition, or being well inclin'd, as having an earnest desire after eternal life, for which reason they believed, or were fitted and prepared for eternal life, by the temper of their minds, and accordingly they believed.

Ans. 1. If the word, which we render *ordain'd*, be justly translated, the thing which they were ordain'd to, being something that was future, it is, in effect, the same, as though it were said they were fore-ordain'd to it, as *Beza* observes^l.

2. Suppose the word ought rather to be translated, they were disposed unto eternal life; that seems to contain in it a metaphor, taken from a General's disposing, or ordering, his soldiers to their respective posts, or employments, to which he appoints them, and so it is as though he should say, as many as God had, in his providence, or antecedent purpose, intended for salvation, believed, inasmuch as faith is the means and way to attain it, and that amounts to the same thing with our translation. But,

3. As to that other sense given of it, viz. their being internally disposed for eternal life, it seems very disagreeable to the import of the *Greek* word; and those texts, that are generally brought to justify this application thereof, appear to be very much strain'd and forc'd by them, to serve their purpose^m; and, indeed, if the word would bear such a sense, the doctrine contain'd therein, namely, that

there are some internal dispositions in men, antecedent to the grace of God, whereby they are fitted and prepared for it, does not well agree with the sense of those scriptures, which set forth man's natural opposition to the grace of God, before he is regenerate and converted, and his enmity against him; and others that assert the absolute necessity of the previous work of the Spirit, to prepare for, as well as excite the acts of faith.

Object. 2. 'Tis farther objected, that it cannot respect their being ordained, or chosen to eternal life, who believed, inasmuch as none that plead for that doctrine suppose that all, who are elected in one place, believe at the same time; had it been said, that all, who believed at that time, were ordain'd to eternal life, that would be agreeable to what is maintain'd by those who defend the doctrine of election; but to say, that all, who are elected to eternal life, in any particular city, are perswaded to believe at the same time, this is what they will not allow of: Besides, 'tis not usual for God to discover this to, or by, the inspired writers, that, in any particular place, there are no more elected than those who are, at any one time, converted; and, indeed, 'tis contrary to the method of God's providence to bring in all his elect at one time, therefore we cannot suppose that this was revealed to the inspired writer, and consequently something else must be intended, and not eternal election, namely, that all those that were prepared for eternal life, or who were disposed to pursue after it, believedⁿ.

Ans. When the Apostle says, as many as were ordain'd to eternal life believed, we are not hereby led into this hidden mystery of the divine will, so as to be able to judge, whether more than they that then believed, were ordain'd to it in that place; but the meaning is, that there were many that believed, and that all of them were ordain'd to eternal life; and so 'tis as though he should say, that God has a people in this place, whom he has ordain'd to eternal life, who were to be converted, some at one time, others at another: some of them were converted at this time, to wit, a part of those

ⁱ τεταγμένοι:

^k Vid. *Whitby* in loc.

^l Vid. *Beza* in loc.

^m The principal text that Dr. *Whitby* refers to, as justifying his sense of the word, is in *Acts* xx. 13. *We went to Assos, there intending to take in Paul, for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot*; the words are, *οὕτω γὰρ ἡν διατεταγμένος μέλλων αὐτὸς περὶεῖν*; which he understands as though the meaning was, that the Apostle was disposed, in his own mind, to go afoot; but that sense is not agreeable to the scope of the text, for the meaning of it seems to be this: That it was determined, ordered, or preconcerted by them, before they set sail, that *Paul* should be taken in at *Assos*, since he was to go there afoot; so that this makes nothing to that author's purpose, but rather to the sense that we have given of the word.

ⁿ See *Grot.* in loc.

who were ordain'd to eternal life, if more were ordain'd to it; so that the objection supposes, that the word, which we render *as many as*, imports the whole number of the elect in that place; whereas we think that the meaning is, that there were many who believed, and these were only such who were ordain'd to eternal life, of which there might be many more, who then did not believe, but hereafter should; but this remain'd a secret, which the inspired writer was not led into, nor we by him.

Object. 3. There is another objection, which the learned author^o (whose *Paraphrase* on the New Testament, and *Discourse* on election, I am sometimes obliged to refer to, in considering the objections that are made against this doctrine) proposes with a great deal of warmth; and if no reply can be given to it, it will be no wonder to find many prejudiced against it; his words are these: "If the reason why these men believed be only this, that they were men ordain'd to eternal life, the reason why the rest believed not, can be this only, that they were not ordain'd by God to eternal life; and, if so, what necessity could there be, that the word of God should be first preached to them, as we read, *Ver. 46.* was it only that their damnation might be the greater? This seems to charge that Lover of souls, whose tender mercies are over all his works, with the greatest cruelty, seeing it makes him determine, from all eternity, not only that so many souls, as capable of salvation as any other, shall perish everlastingly; but also to determine, that the dispensations of his providence shall be such towards them, as necessarily tends to the aggravation of their condemnation; and what could, even their most malicious and enraged enemy, do more? What is it the very devil aims at, by all his temptations, but this very end, *viz.* the aggravation of our future punishment? And therefore to assert that God had determin'd that his word should be spoken to these *Jews*, for this very end, is to make God as instrumental to their ruin, as the very devil, and seemeth wholly irreconcilable with his declarations, that he would have all men to be saved, and would not that any man should perish."

Ans. According to this author, we must either quit the doctrine we are

maintaining, provided it be the same as he represents it to be, or else must be charged, by all mankind, with such horrid blasphemy, as is shocking to any one that reads it, as charging the Lover of souls with the greatest cruelty, and with acting in such a way, as their greatest enemy is said to do; determining, that the dispensations of his providence should tend to aggravate their condemnation, and that the gospel should be preached for this end, and no other. But let the blasphemy rest on his misrepresentation, and far be it from us to advance any such doctrine; therefore that which may be consider'd, in answer to it, is,

1. The immediate reason why men believe to eternal life, is, because God exerts the exceeding greatness of his power, whereby he works faith; and the reason of his exerting this power is, because he determined to do it, as 'tis the execution of his purpose.

2. It does not follow from hence, that the only reason why others do not believe is, because they were not ordain'd to eternal life. 'Tis true, indeed, that their not having been ordain'd to eternal life, or God's not having purposed to save them, is the reason why he does not exert that power that is necessary to work faith; and unbelief will certainly be the consequence thereof, unless man could believe without the divine energy; yet the immediate spring and cause of unbelief is the corruption and perverseness of human nature, which is chargeable on none else, but man himself. We must certainly distinguish between unbelief's being the consequence of God's not working faith, whereby corrupt nature takes occasion to exert it self, as being destitute of preventing grace; and its being the effect hereof. Is God's denying the revengeful person, or the murderer, that grace, which would prevent his executing his bloody designs, the cause thereof? Or is his denying to others the necessary supply of their present exigencies, the cause of their making use of unlawful means, by plundering others, to subsist themselves? No more is his denying special grace, which he was not obliged to give to any, the cause of men's unbelief and impenitency; for that is to be assign'd only to that wicked propensity of nature, which inclines us to sin, and not to the divine efficiency; and how far soever this may be the result of God's determining to deny his grace, 'tis not

^o See Dr. *Whitby* in loc.

to be reckoned the effect of that determination.

3. The design of the word's being preached, is not to aggravate the damnation of those that shall not believe, according to this vile suggestion; but that men might be hereby led to know their duty, and that the sovereignty of God, and the holiness of his law, which requires faith and repentance, as well as man's obligation hereunto, might be made known to the world. I do not deny, but that unbelief, and the condemnation consequent thereupon, is aggravated by the giving of the gospel, for that appears from many scriptures^p; as when our Saviour upbraids *Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum*, and other places, amongst whom he was conversant, with their unbelief, and represents their condemnation as greater than that of others, who were destitute of those privileges: But yet 'tis a malicious insinuation, to suppose we conclude that the gospel was given for this end; and we must still distinguish between the greater aggravation of condemnation's being the result of giving the gospel, or the remote consequence thereof, and its being the effect of it in those that reject the gospel, and much less the design of God in giving it.

4. God's denying that grace, which would have enabled men to believe, is not to be charged as an instance of cruelty, any more than his denying it to fallen angels, but 'tis rather a display of his justice. He was not obliged to give grace to any of the apostate race of man; therefore shall his denying the grace of faith be reckon'd an instance of cruelty, when we consider the forfeiture that was before made thereof, and man's propensity to sin, which is chargeable only on himself.

5. God's purpose to deny the grace of faith to those whom he has not ordain'd to eternal life, is not inconsistent with that scripture^q, in which 'tis said, that *he will have all men to be saved*; so that, as will be farther observed elsewhere^r, it respects either God's determining that salvation should be applied to all sorts of men, or else his declaring, by his reveal'd will, that 'tis the duty of all men to believe, and to acknowledge the truth, as made known to them in the gospel.

3. They who are elected to salvation, are chosen in Christ: thus it is expressly

said, in *Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.*

We are not to suppose that the Apostle intends hereby, that we are chosen for the sake of Christ, as though any of his mediatorial acts were the ground and reason thereof; for election is an act of sovereign grace, or is resolv'd into the good pleasure of the will of God, and is not to be accounted a purchased blessing; therefore when we speak of the concern of the Mediator, with relation hereunto, this is to be consider'd as a means ordain'd by God, to bring his elect to salvation, rather than the foundation of their election. This proposition necessarily follows from the former; for if they, who are chosen to the end, are chosen to the means, then Christ's mediatorial acts being the highest and first means of salvation, God's eternal purpose respects this, as subservient thereunto.

There are some very considerable divines^t who distinguish between our being chosen in Christ, as an Head, and being chosen in him as a Redeemer; and accordingly they conclude, that there are two distinct relations, in which the elect are said to stand to Christ, both which are mention'd by the Apostle, when he says, *Christ is the Head of the church, and the Saviour of the body*^u; and they are also mention'd distinctly elsewhere, *He is the Head of the body the church*, and then it follows, that he *made peace, through the blood of his cross*^v; and they add, that the elect are consider'd as his members, without any regard had to their fallen state; and that the blessings contain'd therein are such, as render their condition more honourable and glorious, than otherwise it would have been, had they been only consider'd as creatures, without any relation to him as their Head; and this Headship of Christ they extend not only to men, but the holy angels, whom they suppose to be chosen, in this respect, in Christ, as well as men, and that 'tis owing hereunto that they have the grace of confirmation confer'd upon them; and it also follows from hence, that Christ would have been the Head of the election of grace, though man had not fallen, and that our fallen state render'd that other relation of Christ to his elect necessary; so that as they are chosen to salvation, they are chosen in him as a Redeemer, design'd to bring about this great work for them, and, for

^p Matt. xi. 21. Luke x. 13.

Vol. II. of Election.

^q 1 Tim. ii. 4.

^r Eph. v. 23.

^t See Quest. XLIV, LXVIII.

^u Coloss. i. 18, 19, 20.

^v See Dr. Goodwin,

this end, set up, as it is express'd, *from everlasting* ^u.

This distinction of Christ's double relation to the elect, is, doubtless, design'd by those who thus explain this doctrine to advance his glory; notwithstanding it remains still a matter of doubt to me, whether Christ's Headship over his church be not a branch of his mediatorial glory; and if so, it will be very difficult to prove that a Mediator respects any other than man, and him more particularly consider'd as fallen; and accordingly God did not design hereby to advance him to an higher condition, than what was barely the result of his being a creature, but to deliver him from that state of sin and misery, into which he foresaw that he would plunge himself. Therefore, in considering the order of God's eternal purpose, relating to the salvation of his people, we must suppose that he first design'd to glorify all his perfections in their redemption and salvation; and, in order hereunto, he fore-ordained, or appointed Christ to be their great Mediator, in whom he would be glorified, and by whom this work was to be brought about: He appointed him to be their Head, Surety, and Redeemer; first, to purchase salvation for them; and then, to make them meet for it, in the same order in which it is brought about by him in the execution thereof; so that, as the glory of God, in the salvation of the elect, was the end, Christ's redemption was the means more immediately conducive thereunto, and, as such, he is said to be fore-ordain'd, to wit, to perform those offices that he executes as Mediator^x; and as Christ, when he was manifested in the flesh, did all things for his people, that were necessary to bring them to glory, he is, in God's purpose, consider'd as the great Mediator, by whom he design'd this work should be brought about: thus he is set forth in the gospel, as a propitiation for sin; and the Apostle seems to speak of it, as what was the result of God's purpose, in *Rom. iii. 25.* whom God hath *set forth* to be a propitiation; the *Greek* word ^y properly signifies, as it is observ'd in the marginal reference, *fore-ordain'd* so to be; and accordingly we must consider him as from all eternity in God's purpose, appointed to be the federal Head of those who are said to be chosen in him, and to have all the concerns of the divine glory relating to

their salvation committed to his management.

V. We shall now consider the properties of election, and how the divine perfections are display'd therein, agreeably to what is said concerning it in scripture.

1. As it is taken for the purpose of God, relating to the sanctification or salvation of men, as distinguished from the execution thereof, it is eternal: This is evident, because God is eternal, his purposes must be concluded to be of equal duration with his existence; for we cannot suppose that an infinitely wise and sovereign Being existed from all eternity, without any fore-thought, or resolution what to do, for that would be to suppose him to have been undetermin'd, or unresolv'd, when he first gave being to all things; nor is it to be supposed that there are any new determinations in the divine will, for that would argue him to be imperfect, since this would be an instance of mutability in him, as much as it would be for him to alter his purpose; but neither of these are agreeable to the *Idea* of an infinitely perfect Being.

Moreover, if God's purpose, with respect to the salvation of men, were not eternal, then it must be consider'd as a new after-thought arising in the divine mind, which, as to its first rise, is but, as it were, of yesterday, and consequently he would have something in him that is finite. If it be contrary to his omniscience to have new *Ideas* of things, 'tis equally contrary to the sovereignty of his will to have new determinations, therefore all his purposes were eternal.

2. God's purpose relating to election is infinitely wise and holy, this appears from the footsteps of infinite wisdom, and holiness, which are visible in the execution thereof, namely, in bringing men to grace and glory; nothing is more conspicuous than the glory of these perfections in the work of redemption, and the application thereof; as hereby the salvation of man is brought about in such a way, that the glory of all the divine perfections is secured, and the means made use of, as conducive thereunto, the most proper that could have been used, therefore 'tis a work of infinite wisdom. And inasmuch as herein God discovers the infinite opposition of his nature to sin, and thereby advances the glory of his holiness, it fol-

^u Prov. viii. 23.

^x 1 Pet. i. 20.

^y προΐστα.

lows from hence, that these perfections of the divine nature had their respective concern, if we may so express it, in the purpose relating hereunto; for whatever glory is demonstrated in the execution of his purpose, that was certainly before included in the purpose it self.

3. The purpose of God, relating to the final state of man, is secret, or cannot be known, till he is pleased to discover it. Nothing is more obvious than this; for even the purposes or resolutions of creatures are secret till they are made known by them: thus the Apostle says, *What man knoweth the things of a man, that is, what he designs to do, save the Spirit of a man, which is in him?* and infers, in the following words, *so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*^a; and elsewhere he says, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor*^a? And, for this reason, it is called, *The mystery of his will*^b; and this also follows from its being eternal, therefore it was hid in God, from before the foundation of the world, and consequently would for ever have been so, had he not by his works, or word, made some discoveries thereof, to those whom he first brought into being, and then gave some intimations of his purpose to them.

Therefore it could not have been known that God had purposed to save any, had he not revealed this in the gospel, much less have any particular persons ground to conclude themselves to be elected, without first observing those intimations which God has given, whereby they may arrive to the knowledge thereof. This *Head* ought to be duly consider'd, by those who deny, and are prejudiced against this doctrine, though it be generally neglected in the methods they take to oppose it; for they will not consider the distinction we make between God's having chosen a person to eternal life, and a person's having a right to conclude that he is thus chosen; but take it for granted, that if there be such a thing as election, that we must necessarily determine our selves to be the objects thereof, and ought to regulate our future conduct accordingly. It is from thence they conclude, that the doctrine of election leads men to presumption, or gives them occasion to say, that they may live as they list; whereas we suppose that it is an instance of presumption in any one to determine that he is elected, unless there be some discovery

hereof made to him; and this discovery cannot take its rise from God, unless it be accompanied with that holiness, which is, from the nature of the thing, inconsistent with our being led hereby to licentiousness. And here we may take occasion to consider, that God does not make known his secret purpose; relating to this matter, to any by inspiration, especially since that extraordinary dispensation of providence is ceased; and, indeed, it never was his ordinary way to discover it hereby to those, who, in other instances, were favoured with the gift of inspiration. The means therefore by which we come to the knowledge hereof, is, by God's giving certain marks, or evidences of grace, or by shewing us the effects of the divine power, in calling and sanctifying us, whereby we have a warrant to conclude that we were chosen to eternal life; and, whilst we make a right improvement thereof, and conclude that our judgment, concerning our state, is rightly founded, or not, by the holiness of our lives, we are in no danger of abusing this great and important doctrine, to the dishonour of God, or our own destruction.

This leads us to consider a distinction, which we are often obliged to make use of, when we speak concerning the will of God, as secret or reveal'd, by which we account for the sense of many scriptures, and take occasion from it to answer several objections that are brought against this doctrine. I am sensible that there is nothing advanced in defence thereof, which they, who are in the other way of thinking, are more prejudiced against, than this distinction, which they suppose to contain a reproachful *Idea* of the divine Majesty, and is the foundation of many popular prejudices against the doctrine we are defending, as though we hereby intended that God has a secret meaning, different from what he reveals; or that we are not to judge of his intentions by those discoveries which he makes thereof, which it would be the highest reproach to charge any creature with, and contrary to that sincerity which he cannot be destitute of, but he is hereby render'd the object of detestation; therefore no one, who conceives of an holy God, in such a way as he ought to do, can entertain a thought, as though the least appearance thereof were applicable to him. However, this is the common misrepresentation that is made of this di-

^a 1 Cor. ii. 11.

^a Rom. xi. 34.

^b Eph. i. 9.

234 GOD'S secret and reveal'd Will farther explain'd.

inction. Whether it arises from its being not sufficiently explain'd by some; or a fixed resolution to decry the doctrine of election, and render it odious, as it must certainly be, if supported by a distinction, understood in so vile a sense, I will not determine. However, that we may remove this prejudice, and consider how it is to be understood, in a sense more agreeable to the divine perfections, we shall proceed to explain it; and here we may observe,

First, That the will of God is sometimes taken, in scripture, for that which he has, from all eternity, determin'd, which is unchangeable, and shall certainly come to pass, which it is impossible for any creature to disannul, resist, or render ineffectual; and it is such a branch of divine sovereignty, that to deny it, would be, in effect, to deny him to be God. This the Apostle intends, when he represents the malicious and obstinate sinner as replying against God, and defending himself in his bold crimes, by saying, *Why doth he yet find fault; for who hath resisted his will?*^c In answer to which, he asserts the sovereignty of God, and that he is not accountable to any for what he does, nor to be controul'd by them; and this is also intended in another scripture, in *Eph. i. 11.* where 'tis said, that *God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*; and elsewhere he says, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*^d. This will of God is the rule of his own acting, and, as it determines the event of things, it is impossible for him to act contrary to it; and it is equally disagreeable to his perfections to signify to his creatures, that he determines to do one thing, but will do another; therefore, in this sense, we are far from asserting that there is a reveal'd will of God, which contradicts his secret.

Secondly, We often read, in scripture, of the will of God, as taken for what he has prescribed to us, as a rule of duty; and also of our judging concerning the apparent event of things.

(1.) The will of God may be consider'd as a rule of duty, which is a well-known and proper sense of his reveal'd will: thus our Saviour teaches us to pray, *Let thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*; by which he principally intends his reveal'd will, *q. d.* enable us to yield obedience to thy law, in our measure, as thou art perfectly obey'd in heaven. So

our Saviour says, *Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother*^e; which can be meant of no other than his reveal'd will, or of his law, in which it is contain'd; because no one can act contrary to God's determination, which is that sense of his will, contain'd in the foregoing *Head*; and consequently a doing his will, in that sense, would not have been laid down as a distinguishing character of those whom Christ prefer'd above all, who were related to him in the bonds of nature.

Again, the Apostle understands the will of God in this sense, when he says, *Thou knowest his will*^f, where he speaks to the *Jews*, who were instructed out of the law, in which it is contain'd; and elsewhere^g he speaks of his will, as what is to be obey'd, and therefore gives this description of faithful servants, that they *do the will of God*, namely, what he has commanded, *from the heart*. And there are many other scriptures thus to be understood, and this we call his revealed will, as it is the rule of duty and obedience.

(2.) The reveal'd will of God may be consider'd as a rule which he has given us, whereby we are to judge of the apparent event of things. I make this a branch of God's reveal'd will, inasmuch as sometimes he condescends to discover future events to his creatures, which otherwise they could never have known; but yet there is a difference as to the manner of their judging thereof, pursuant to the intimations which he has given them. Accordingly, when God has told us expressly, that this or that particular thing shall come to pass, then we are infallibly sure concerning the event, and need no other rule to judge of it, but by considering it as revealed: As when God has said, that there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, and that Christ shall come to judgment, and receive his redeemed, and sanctified ones, to heaven, to behold his glory, we are infallibly assured of these events, because they are expressly reveal'd; and, when we speak of the secret and reveal'd will of God, as applicable to things of this nature, we intend nothing else hereby but what all will allow of, that that, which would have been for ever a secret, had it not been discover'd, is now reveal'd, and therefore ceases to be so; and, in that sense, the reveal'd will of God, in all respects, agrees with his secret;

^c Rom. ix. 19, 20, 21, 22.

^d Isai. xli. 10.

^e Mark iii. 35.

^f Rom. ii. 18.

^g Eph. vi. 6.

in this case, we suppose that God expressly reveal'd the event.

But there are other instances, in which the event of things is not expressly reveal'd; as when God has only discover'd to us what is the rule of our duty. Nevertheless, since it is natural for man, when any duty is commanded, to pass some judgment concerning the event thereof; and inasmuch as we suppose the event not expressly reveal'd, it follows, that the judgment, which we pass concerning it, is only what appears to us, or what, according to our rule of judging, seems to be the probable event of things. In this case we are not infallibly assured concerning it; and when we pass a judgment relating thereunto, we may conclude that some consequences may attend our present duty, which, perhaps, will never come to pass. As if a General of an army gives forth a command to his soldiers, to march towards the enemy, they will readily conclude, that he designs, by this command, that they should enter on some action, which, had he expressly told them, he must either change his purpose, or else the event must certainly happen: But inasmuch as he has not discover'd this to them, all the judgment that they can form, at present, concerning it, is only such, as is founded on the appearance of things, and the event might probably afterwards shew, without any impeachment of his veracity or conduct herein, that his only design was to try whether his soldiers would obey the word of command, or not: Or if a King should order a number of malefactors to the place of execution, without discovering the event thereof, the apparent event is their immediate death; but if, pursuant to his secret purpose, he resolved, there to give forth a pardon to them, it cannot be supposed that he changed his purpose; but the event makes it appear, that his purpose was not then known; whatever the apparent event might be, his real design was to humble them for their crimes, and afterwards to pardon them.

It is only in such-like instances as these that we apply this distinction to the doctrine that we are maintaining; and therefore it must be a very great stretch, of malicious insinuation, for any one to suppose, that hereby we charge God with insincerity in those declarations of his reveal'd will, by which we pass a probable judgment concerning the event of things. But, to apply this to particular instances. God

commanded *Abraham* to offer up his son *Isaac*^h, whereas it is certain, unless we suppose that he alter'd his purpose, that he intended, not that he should lay his hand upon him, but, when *Isaac* was upon the altar, to forbid him to do it. Here was a great and a difficult duty, which *Abraham* was to perform, pursuant to God's reveal'd will, which was the rule of his obedience; had *Abraham* known, before this, that God design'd to hold his hand, and prevent him from striking the fatal blow, it had been no trial of his faith; for it would have been no difficult matter for him to have done every thing else: The holy patriarch knew well enough that God could prevent him from doing it; but this he had no ground to conclude, because he had no divine intimation concerning it; therefore that which appear'd to him to be the event, was the loss of his son, and he reconciled this with the truth of the promise before given him, that *in Isaac his seed should be called*, by supposing that God, at some time or other, would *raise him from the dead*, as the Apostle observesⁱ; therefore that which *Abraham* concluded, as judging, not by an express revelation, but by the voice of providence, was, that *Isaac* must be slain by his hand: But this was contrary to the real event, as is evident, from the account thereof in scripture; and consequently since the real event was agreeable to the divine determination, as all events are, it follows, that there is a difference between the will of God, determining the event of things, which shall certainly come to pass accordingly; and the revelation of his will, relating to what is the creatures present duty, which may, at the same time, appear to them, when judging only by the command, which is the rule of duty, and some circumstances that attend it, to be contrary to what will afterwards appear to have been the real design of God therein. God's real design was to try *Abraham's* faith, and to prevent him from slaying his son, when he had given a proof of his readiness to obey him; but this remain'd, at first, a secret to *Abraham*, and the apparent design was, that he should slay him. Therefore there is a foundation for this distinction, as thus explain'd, concerning the secret and reveal'd will of God; the former belongs not to us, nor are we to take our measures from it, as being unknown; and, when the latter appears contrary to it,

^h Gen. xxii. 2.

ⁱ Heb. xi. 19.

236 GOD'S Will is free, sovereign, and unconditional.

we must distinguish between two things, that are contrary in the same and different respects; or between the judgment which we pass concerning events, which are apparent to us, and, at most, are only probable and conjectural, as we judge of the consequence of a duty commanded; and those events, which, though they are infallibly certain, yet are not reveal'd, nor can be known, till they come to pass. In this sense we understand the distinction between God's secret and reveal'd will, when they seem to oppose each other, which it was necessary for us thus to explain, inasmuch as we shall frequently have occasion to mention, and apply it, when we account for the difference that there seems to be, between the purpose of God, relating to the event of things, and our present views thereof, whereby we may understand and account for the difficulties contain'd in several scriptures, which I would have mention'd in this place, for the farther illustration hereof, had it been necessary. But this is sufficient to explain and vindicate it from the prejudices entertain'd against it, by those who are disposed to misrepresent what is said in defence of this doctrine.

From what has been said, concerning God's secret and reveal'd will, we may infer,

1st. That 'tis a great boldness, and unwarrantable instance of presumption, for any one to enter into, or judge of God's secret purpose, so as peremptorily to determine, beyond the present appearance of things, that this or that shall certainly come to pass, till he makes them known; for *secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever*^k. Therefore no one ought to determine that he is elected to salvation, before the work of grace is wrought, and, some way or other, made visible to him; or, on the other hand, to determine that he is rejected or reprobated, when he has no other ground to go upon, but uncertain conjecture, which would be a means to drive him to despair: That some are, indeed, elected, and others rejected, is no secret, because God has reveal'd this in his word; so that we may assert it as a proposition, undoubtedly true, when we do not apply it to particular persons; and therefore this doctrine has not that pernicious tendency, which many pretend that it has.

2^{dly}. The first act of saving faith does not

consist in our believing that we are elect-ed; neither is it the duty of unregenerate persons, as such, to apply this privilege to themselves, any more than to conclude themselves rejected: But our business is, so long as the purpose of God remains a secret to us, to attend on the means of grace, hoping and waiting for the display of divine power, in effectually calling us; and afterwards for the Spirit's testimony, or seal, to be set to it, whereby he discovers his own work; and then it may, in some measure, be reckon'd a branch of his reveal'd will, and will afford us matter of thanksgiving and praise to him, and a foundation of peace and comfort in our own souls. But this may be farther insisted on, when we come to consider the improvement we ought to make of this doctrine; which leads us to consider the next property of election.

4. It is free and sovereign, or absolute, and unconditional; for that which would be a reflection on the divine perfections, if applied to God's method of working, is, by no means, to be said concerning his purpose to work, or, (which is the same) his decree of election; therefore if there are no obligations laid on him by his creatures, to display or perform any of his works of grace, but they are all free and sovereign, then it follows, that the foresight of any thing that shall be done by them, in time, could not be the motive, or reason, of his purpose, or decree, to save them, or of his choosing them to salvation.

This may be farther argued, from the independence of the divine nature: If his nature and perfections are independent, his will must be so. But more particularly,

(1.) The displays of God's grace, in time, are expressly resolv'd into his sovereign pleasure, in scripture, in *Rom. ix. 15. He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* And there are many other scriptures, which might be refer'd to, where all merit, or motives, taken from the creature, which might be supposed to induce him to bestow spiritual and saving blessings, are entirely excluded, and the whole is resolv'd into the glory of his own name, and, in particular, of those perfections which he designed herein to illustrate. This is applied, even to the common blessings of providence; *Nevertheless, he saved them for his names sake, that he*

^k Deut. xxix. 29.

might make his mighty power to be known¹; and it is also applied to sparing mercy, or the exercise of God's patience, *For my names sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off^m*; and to pardoning mercy, *For thy names sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is greatⁿ*. And when he is represented as doing great things for his people, he puts them in mind, at the same time, of their own vileness and unworthiness, that the freeness and sovereignty of his grace, to them, might be more conspicuous: Thus, when he tells them how he deliver'd *Israel* out of *Egypt*, he puts them in mind of their idolatry in that land; therefore no motive could be taken, from their behaviour towards him, which could induce him to do this for them; as it is said, *But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me; they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt; then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them, in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought, for my names sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made my self known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt^o*.

(2.) If the grace of God, and consequently his purpose relating thereunto, were not absolute, free, and sovereign, then all the glory thereof could not be attributed to him, neither would boasting be excluded; but as the creature might be said to be a worker together with God, so he would lay claim to a share, if not to the greatest part of the honour, that will redound to him from it; which is directly contrary to the divine perfections, and the great design of the gospel. This will farther appear, if we consider,

1st. That a conditional purpose to bestow a benefit, cannot take effect till the condition be performed, and accordingly it is said to depend on it. This is obvious, from the known *Idea* affixed to the word *Condition*, and the common signification thereof; it follows therefore,

2^{dly}. That the performance of the condition is the next, or immediate cause of a conditional purpose's taking effect; and, to apply this to the case before us,

3^{dly}. If, on our performing the condition of God's purpose to save us, it be

render'd effectual, which otherwise it would not have been, (agreeably to the nature of a conditional purpose) then we are more beholden to our own conduct; than the divine purpose, and so the glory thereof will be due to our selves; which would not only cast the highest dishonour on the divine perfections, but it is contrary to the design of the gospel, which is to stain the pride of all flesh, and take away all occasions of glorying from the creature. Thus the prophet *Isaiah*; foretelling the glory of the gospel-state, considers its tendency to humble the pride of man, when he says, *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day^p*; and the Apostle, describing the nature of faith, considers its tendency to exclude boasting^q; and our Saviour, speaking concerning the discriminating grace of God, that appears in election, either in his purpose relating to it, or in the execution thereof, says, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you^r*, that is, you have done nothing that has laid any obligation on me to choose you, but that act of faith, whereby you are inclined to prefer me to all others, is the consequence and result of my discriminating grace.

We shall now proceed to consider those arguments, which are generally made use of by them, who are in the other way of thinking, to support the conditionality of God's purpose, as well as of his works of grace, in opposition to what has been said concerning the freeness and sovereignty thereof. They generally alledge those scriptures for that purpose, that are laid down in a conditional form; as when the Apostle speaks of such a *confession* of Christ, *with the mouth*, as is attended with, *believing in the heart, that God raised him from the dead, and calling on the name of the Lord*, as connected with salvation^s; and our Saviour says, that *whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life^t*; and that *he that believeth shall be saved^u*; and elsewhere, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish^v*, and many other scriptures of the like nature; from whence they argue, that since the dispensations of God's providence, the gifts of his grace, and the execution of his purpose, are all conditional, the purpose it self must be so. Were it but allowed that election

¹ Psal. cvi. 8.

^q Rom. iii. 27.

^x Luke xiii. 3.

^m Isai. xlviii. 5.

^r John xv. 16.

ⁿ Psal. xxv. 11.

^s Rom. x. 9, 13.

^o Ezek. xx. 8, 9.

^t John i. 13.

^p Isai. ii. 17.

^u Mark xvi. 16.

238 *Conditional Propositions, how understood in Scripture.*

is conditional, whether it respects the purpose or providence of God, we should meet with no opposition from those who are on the other side of the question; but as such a purpose to save, as is not absolute, peremptory, or independent on the will of man, has many absurd consequences attending it, which are derogatory to the glory of the divine sovereignty, as has been already consider'd; so this cannot be the sense of those scriptures, that are laid down in a conditional form, as those, and such-like are, that we have but now mention'd; for no sense of scripture can be true or just that has the least tendency to militate against any of the divine perfections; so that there may, without any strain or violence offer'd to the sense of words, be another sense put upon these, and all other scriptures, in which we have the like mode of speaking, whereby they may be explain'd, agreeably to the analogy of faith; therefore let us consider,

1. That all such scriptures are to be understood as importing the necessary connection of things, so that one shall not be brought about without the other; accordingly, repentance, faith, and all other graces, are herein no otherwise consider'd, than as inseparably connected with salvation; which depends upon one of those propositions, which was before laid down, *viz.* that God having chosen to the end, has also chosen to the means. We are far from denying that faith and repentance are necessary to salvation, as God never gives one without the other, and consequently they are inseparably connected in his eternal purpose relating thereunto. If nothing else were intended by a conditional purpose than this, we would not offer any thing against it; but certainly this would be to use words without their known or proper *Ideas*; and the word *Condition*, as applicable to other things, is never to be understood in this sense. There is a necessary connection between God's creating the world, and his upholding it, or between his creating an intelligent creature, and his giving laws to him; but none ever supposed one to be properly a condition of the other: So a king's determining to pardon a malefactor, is inseparably connected with his pardoning him, and his pardon given forth, with his having a right to his forfeited life; but it is not proper to say, one is a condition of the other; so a person's seeing is inseparably connected with his opening his eyes; and speaking, with

the motion of his lips; but we do not say, when he determines to do both of them, that one is a condition of the other. A condition, properly speaking, is that which is not only connected with the privilege that follows upon the performance thereof, but it must be perform'd by a subject acting independently on him, who made the conditional overture, or promise.

If it be said, that a duty, which we are enabled to perform by God, who promised the blessing connected with it, is properly a condition, we will not contend about the propriety, or impropriety, of the word; but inasmuch as it is taken by many, when applied to divine things, in the same sense as in matters of a lower nature, and so used to signify the dependence of the blessings promised, or the efficacy of the divine purpose, relating thereunto, on our performance of the condition, which is supposed to be in our own power, whereby we come to have a right and title to eternal life; 'tis this that we principally militate against, when we assert the absoluteness of God's purpose.

2. Whatever *Ideas* there may be contain'd in those scriptures, which are brought to support the doctrine we are opposing, that contain in them the nature of a condition, nothing more is intended thereby, but that what is connected with salvation is a condition of our claim to it, or expectation of it: In this sense, we will not deny faith and repentance to be conditions of salvation, inasmuch as it would be an unwarrantable instance of presumption, for impenitent and unbelieving sinners, to pretend that they have a right to it, or to expect the end without the means, since these are inseparably connected in God's purpose, as well as in all his dispensations of grace. This being laid down, as a general rule for our understanding all those scriptures, which are usually brought to prove that God's purposes are sometimes conditional, we shall farther illustrate it, by applying it to three or four other scriptures, that are often brought in defence thereof, which we shall endeavour to explain, consistently with the doctrine we are maintaining.

One is taken from *Gen. xix. 22.* where the angel bade Lot *escape to Zoar*, telling him, that *he could not do any thing till he came thither.* If we suppose this to have been a created angel, as most divines do, yet he must be consider'd as fulfilling the purpose of God, or acting pursuant to his

GOD'S Will not prov'd to be conditional from Scripture. 237

his commission; and therefore it is all one, to our present argument, as though God had told *Lot*, that he could do nothing till he was gone from that place. 'Tis plain, that he had given him to understand, that he should be preserved from the flames of *Sodom*, and that, in order thereunto, he must flee for his life; and adds, that he could do nothing, that is, he could not destroy *Sodom*, consistently with the divine purpose to save him, till he was escaped out of the place; for God did not design to preserve him alive (as he did the three *Hebrew* captives, in *Daniel*) in the fire, but by his escaping from it; one was as much fore-ordain'd as the other, or was designed as a means conducive to it; and therefore the meaning of the text is, not that God's purpose, relating to *Sodom*'s destruction, was founded on *Lot*'s escape, as an uncertain and dubious condition, depending on his own will, abstracted from the divine determination relating to it; but he designed that those two things should be connected together, and that one should be antecedent to the other; and both of them, as well as their respective connection, were the object of God's absolute and peremptory determination.

There is another scripture, sometimes brought to the same purpose, in *Gen.* xxxii. 26. where the angel says to *Jacob*, *Let me go, for the day breaketh*; and *Jacob* replies, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*, which does not infer, that God's determinations were dependent on *Jacob*'s endeavour to detain him, or his willingness to let him depart; but we must consider *Jacob* as an humble, yet importunate suppliant, as it is said elsewhere, *Weeping and making supplication*. *Let me go*, says God, appearing in the form of an angel, and speaking after the manner of men, that he might give occasion to *Jacob* to express a more ardent desire of his presence and blessing, as well as to signify how unworthy he was of it; not as though he was undetermined beforehand what to do, but since both the grace which *Jacob* exercised, as well as the blessing which he received, was God's gift, and both were connected in the execution of his purpose, we must conclude that the purpose it self was free, sovereign, and unconditional.

Again, there is another scripture, in which God condescends to use a mode of speaking, not much unlike to the other, in which he says to *Moses*, speaking con-

cerning *Israel*, in *Exod.* xxxii. 10. *This is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*; we are not to suppose that the whole event was to turn upon *Moses*'s prayer, as though God's purposing to save his people were dependent on it; or that that grace, which inclined him to be importunate with God, did not take its rise from him. *Moses*, indeed, when first he began to plead with God, knew not whether his prayer would be prevalent or no; however, he addresses himself, with an uncommon degree of importunity, for sparing mercy; and, when God says, *Let me alone*, it signifies, that his people were unworthy that any one should plead their cause; and, if God should mark iniquity, then *Moses*'s intercession would be altogether in vain, and so he might as well let him alone, in that respect, as ask for this mercy. He does not, indeed, at first, tell him what he designed to do, that he might aggravate their crime, but afterwards he answers his prayer in *Israel*'s favour, and signifies that he would work, not for their sakes, but for his own names sake; so that he takes occasion, on the one hand, to set forth the people's desert of punishment; and, on the other, the freeness of his own grace.

There is but one scripture more that I shall mention, among many that might have been brought, and that is what is said concerning our Saviour, in *Matt.* xiii. 58. that *he could not do many mighty works*, at that time, in his own country, *because of their unbelief*; where he speaks either of their not having a faith of miracles that was sometimes required, in those for whom they were wrought; or else of the unaccountable stupidity of that people, who were not convinced, by many others that he had wrought before them; therefore he resolves to put a stop to his hand, and not, for the present, to work so many miracles amongst them, as otherwise might have been expected: If we suppose that their want of faith prevented his working them, this is not to be consider'd as an unforeseen event; and as he had determined not to confer this privilege upon them, or to continue to work miracles amongst them, if those, which he had already wrought, were disregarded and despised by their unbelief; therefore we must conclude that he had a perfect knowledge of this before-hand,

and that his determinations were not dependent on uncertain conditions, though he had resolved to act in such a way, as was most for his own glory; and that there should be an inseparable connection between that faith, which was their duty, and his continuing to exert divine power, as an ordinance adapted to excite it.

5. God's purpose concerning election is unchangeable; this is the result of his being infinitely perfect. Mutability is an imperfection that belongs only to creatures; as it would be an instance of imperfection, if there were the least change in God's understanding, so as to know more or less than he did from all eternity; and the same must be said with respect to his will, which cannot admit of any new determinations. There are, indeed, many changes in the external dispensations of his providence, which are the result of his will, as well as the effects of his power; yet there is not the least appearance of mutability in his purpose. We have before consider'd, in speaking concerning the immutability of the divine nature², that whatever may be a reason obliging men to alter their purposes, it cannot, in the least, take place, so that God hereby should be obliged to alter his: No unforeseen occurrence can render it expedient for him to change his mind, nor can any superior power oblige him to do it; nor can any defect of power, to bring about what he had designed, induce him to alter his purpose.

If it be objected to this, that the obstinacy of man's will may do it: That is to suppose his will exempted from the governing influence of divine providence, and the contrary force, that offers resistance, superior to it, which cannot be supposed, without detracting from the glory of the divine perfections. It would be a very unworthy thought for any one to conclude that God is one day of one mind, and another day forced to be of the contrary; how far this is a necessary consequence from that scheme of doctrine that we are opposing, let any one judge: It will be very hard to clear it of this entanglement, which they are obliged to do, or else all the absurdities that they fasten on the doctrine of election, which are far from being unanswerable, will not be sufficient to justify their prejudices against it.

They who are on the other side of the question, are sensible that they have one difficulty to conflict with, namely,

the inconsistency of God's infallible knowledge of future events, with a mutability of will relating thereunto; or how the independency of the divine fore-knowledge is consistent with the dependence and mutability of his will. To fence against this, some have ventured to deny the divine prescience; but that is to split against one rock, whilst endeavouring to avoid another. Therefore others distinguish concerning the objects of the divine prescience, and consider them, either as they are necessary or contingent, and accordingly suppose that God has a certain fore-knowledge of the former; but his knowledge of the latter, (from the nature of the things known) is uncertain, and consequently the determination of his will is not unalterable; but this is to set bounds to the fore-knowledge of God, with respect to its object, and, indeed, to exclude the free actions of the creature from being the objects thereof, which is a limiting and lessening of this perfection, and is directly contrary to the *Idea* of omniscience; and therefore we must insist on their proving this to be consistent with the infinite perfection of God, which they will find it very difficult to do; and to suppose, on the other hand, that any thing is the object of God's certain fore-knowledge, about which his will is no way conversant, or only so, in such a way, as that it is subject to change, according to the mutability of things, is altogether as indefensible, and equally subversive of the independency, wisdom, and sovereignty thereof.

Object. The most material objection against this doctrine, is taken from some scriptures, which seem to represent God as repenting, and therein, as it is supposed, changing his purpose: Thus he is sometimes said to repent, that he had bestowed some blessings upon men, when he perceives how they have been abused by them, and accordingly he purposes to bring evil on them; as we read, in *Gen. vi. 6, 7. It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created*; and, at other times, he is said to repent of the evil that he designed to bring upon them, and alter his purpose in their favour: thus 'tis said, in *Deut. xxxii. 36. The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left*;

² See *Pag. 63.*

and in *Joel* ii. 13. *Rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil;* and in *Psal.* xc. 13. *Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants;* and in *Jer.* xviii. 8. *If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.* And we have a very remarkable instance of this, in God's sparing *Nineveh*, on their repentance, after he had threaten'd, by the prophet *Jonah*, that *within forty days they should be destroy'd.*

Answ. 'Tis true, there are many scriptures, in which repentance is ascribed to God, which, if we consider nothing else but the grammatical sense of the words, seem to favour the objection; but we are bound to conclude, that such a sense of repentance, as that on which it is founded, is inconsistent with the divine perfections, and therefore those scriptures, refer'd to therein, cannot imply a change in God's purpose. And, indeed, there are other scriptures, which assert what is directly contrary thereunto, as when it is said, in *Numb.* xxiii. 19. *God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* And elsewhere, in *1 Sam.* xv. 29. it is said, *The strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent.*

But we must have recourse to some methods to reconcile this seeming contradiction, and so consider the sense thereof, in different respects, as applicable to them both; in some scriptures, God is said to repent; in others, it is said that he cannot repent. That these may not appear inconsistent with one another, nor either of them infer any imperfection in God, let it be consider'd, that God is sometimes represented, in scripture, in condescension to our common mode of speaking, as though he had human passions, as, in others, he is described, as though he had a body, or bodily parts: But such expressions are always to be taken, in a metaphorical sense, without the least supposition, that he is subject to any such imperfections; and particularly we must not conclude, that repentance is ever ascribed to God in the same sense as it is to men, *viz.* as implying a change in his purpose, occasioned by any unforeseen occurrence, which is the sense contained

in the objection. Such a repentance, as this, is a passion peculiarly belonging to the creature, and therefore in this sense we must understand those words, *God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent;* accordingly he is said to repent, not by changing his purpose, but by changing his work: Thus when it is said, that *he repented that he had made man*, nothing is meant by it, but that he determined to destroy him, as he did afterwards by the flood; and this was no new determination arising from any thing in the creature, which God did not foresee; he knew before-hand that all flesh would corrupt their way, and therefore his determination to punish them for it, was not a new resolve of the divine will, after the sin was committed; but God, determined things in their respective order, first to permit sin, and then knowing what would be the consequence thereof, namely, that they would rebel against him, he determined to punish it, or to destroy the old world, which is, in effect, the same, as though he had repented that he made it. He cannot be said to repent as we do, by wishing that he had not done that which he is said to repent of, but by denying us the advantage, which we might have otherwise expected from it. In this sense we are to understand all those scriptures that speak of God, as repenting of the good that he had bestow'd on man.

And, on the other hand, when he is said to repent of the evil which he threaten'd to bring on men, as in the case of *Nineveh*, this does not argue any change in his purpose; for he determined that *Nineveh* should be destroy'd, provided they did not repent, and it was not uncertain to him whether they would repent or no; for, at the same time, he determined to give them repentance, as appears by the event, and so not to inflict the judgment threaten'd; and therefore when *Jonah* was sent to make a publick proclamation to the people, that in forty days they should be destroy'd, it is plain that they understood the threatening in this sense, namely, that they had no ground to expect any thing else, except they repented, which accordingly they did, and so were spared, without having any reason to conclude that God changed his purpose relating thereunto.

If it be objected hereunto, that this is nothing less than to establish a conditional purpose in God, and so overthrows the

242 *How the Purpose of God renders Salvation necessary.*

argument that we are maintaining: The reply that may be made to it is; that we distinguish between a conditional purpose, in God's secret will; and a conditional proposition, which was to be the subject of the prophet's ministry: The prophet, it is plain, was not told, when he received his commission to go to *Nineveh*, that God would give them repentance, but only that, without repentance, they should be destroy'd; whereas God, as the event makes it appear, determined that they should repent, and therefore that they should not be destroy'd; and consequently we must not suppose, that, when God sent him, he was undetermined, in his own purpose, whether to destroy them or not, or that there was any thing conditional in the divine mind, that render'd the event uncertain to God, though there was a condition contain'd in the subject-matter of the prophet's message, which the *Ninevites* very well understood, namely, that they had no ground to expect deliverance without repentance, and therefore they repented, in hope of obtaining mercy, which they suppos'd would be connected with their repentance; and it is evident, that *Jonah* himself suspected that this might be the event, though God had not told him that it would be so, and therefore says, in *Chap. iv. 2. For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.*

6. The purpose of God, in choosing men to eternal life, renders their salvation necessary; so that nothing shall defeat, or disannul it. What God says concerning *Israel's* deliverance from the *Babylonish* captivity, may be applied to all his other determinations, and particularly to what relates to the eternal salvation of his people; *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it*^a. The purposes of God, indeed, are distinguished from his bringing them to pass; it is one thing to design to bring his people to glory, and another thing to bring them to it. 'Tis not to be supposed that the decree of God has, in it self, a proper efficiency to produce the thing decreed^b; for then there would be no difference

between an eternal decree, and an eternal production of things; whereas the Apostle plainly distinguishes between man's being predestinated to glory; and brought to it, when he says, *Those whom he predestinated, them he glorified*^c.

The purpose of God is, indeed, the internal moving cause, or the first ground and reason of the salvation of those who are elected to it; but his power is the more immediate cause of it, so that his purpose is the reason of his exerting this power, and, both concurring to the salvation of men, render it certain and necessary. Therefore some distinguish, for the explaining of this, between the determining and powerful will of God; the latter of which is sometimes called, the word of his power, and renders the former effectual; this it must certainly do, otherwise God would be said to will the existence of things, that shall never have a being. In this respect, the purpose of God renders things necessary, which are in themselves contingent, or arbitrary, and would otherwise never come to pass^d.

This is a great encouragement to those who are enabled to make their calling and election sure; for their perseverance in grace, notwithstanding all the opposition that they meet with, is the necessary consequence of their election to eternal life. Thus, as we before distinguished predestination into election and reprobation^e, we have consider'd the former of these, and now proceed,

Secondly, To speak concerning the doctrine of *Reprobation*; which is become obnoxious to those on the other side of the question, almost to a proverb; so that if any doctrine is consider'd as shocking, and to be answered no otherwise than by testifying their abhorrence of it, it is compared to this of reprobation; and, indeed, if it were not a consequence from the doctrine of election to eternal life, that doctrine would not be so much oppos'd by them. How far some unguarded expressions, or exceptionable methods of explication may have given occasion for this prejudice, it is not to our present purpose to enquire; but we shall take occasion, from thence, to explain it, in such a way, as that a fair and unprejudiced disputant will not

^a *Isai. xlv. 10, 11.*

^b This is what is meant by that axiom, used by the school-men, *Decretum Dei, nihil ponit in esse.*

^c *Rom. viii. 30.*

^d Thus the school-men distinguish between *necessitas consequentis*, and *consequentie*; so that that, which is not in it self necessary, is render'd eventually so, as the consequence of God's purpose, that it shall be.

^e See *Pag. 211.*

How the Doctrine of Reprobation ought to be explain'd. 243

see just reason to except against it, at least to reproach it, as though it were a doctrine subversive of the divine glory, and to be defended by none but those who seem to have a design to raise prejudices, in the minds of men, against religion in general.

And here we shall take occasion to consider the meaning of the word, as it is contained in, or deduced from scripture, where the same word that is used to signify the execution of this decree, may be applied to express the decree it self. Thus we read of God's rejecting, or disregarding men, as a punishment of their rebellion against him; and these are compared by the prophet *Jeremiah*^f, *To reprobate silver, because the Lord hath rejected them*; or, as it is in the margin, *The refuse of silver*; and, in the New Testament, the same word^g is sometimes translated reprobates; at other times, disapproved or rejected^h; and when this disapprobation, or rejection, respects not only their actions, as contrary to the holy nature of God, but their persons, as punished for their iniquities; and when this punishment is consider'd, as what respects their eternal state, as the objects of vindictive justice, the purpose of God, relating hereunto, is what we call *Reprobation*.

But, that we may more particularly consider the sense of the word, it seems, in scripture, to contain in it two *Ideas*.

1. God's determining to leave a part of the world in that state of sin and misery, which he, from all eternity, foreknew that they would bring themselves into, or his decreeing not to save them; and, since all will allow that a part of mankind shall not be saved, it cannot reasonably be denied that this was determined by him before-hand; and this is what divines generally call *Preterition*.

2. There is another *Idea* in the word *Reprobation*, which is also contained in scripture, or deducible from it, and that respects the purpose of God to punish those for their iniquities, whom he will not save. Not to be saved, is the same as to be *punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power*. And God's purpose, relating hereunto, is express'd, in scripture, by his *appointing them to wrath*ⁱ, for those sins which he foresaw they would commit. This is what some call *Pre-damnation*, as taken from that expres-

sion of the Apostle^k, concerning some who had *crept into the church unawares*, whom he describes as *ungodly men*, that is notoriously so, who *turned the grace of God into lasciviousness*, for whom *is reserved the blackness of darkness forever*; of these he says, that they were *before, of old, ordained to this condemnation*, where God is represented as punishing sinners, in proportion to their crimes; and this is consider'd, as the result of that eternal purpose, which was founded on his foresight of their contracting that guilt, whereby they would render themselves liable to it.

If this doctrine be thus explained, it will appear agreeable, not only to scripture, but to the divine perfections, and therefore too great a truth to be treated with that abhorrence, with which it generally is, without explaining, distinguishing, or fairly entering into the merits of the cause. It is a very easy matter to render any doctrine odious, by misrepresentation, as they, on the other side of the question, have done this of Reprobation, which we shall briefly consider, and therein take leave to explain it in a different manner, whereby it will appear not only worthy to be defended, as redounding to the glory of God, but a plain and evident truth, founded on scripture.

If this doctrine were to be consider'd no otherwise, than as it is often represented by them, we should dislike it, as much as they do; for when they pretend that we herein suppose God to be severe and cruel to his creatures, delighting himself in, and triumphing over them, in their misery; and that he decreed, from all eternity, to damn the greatest part of mankind, without any consideration of their sin, as the result of his arbitrary will, or dominion, as he has a right to dispose of his creatures, according to his pleasure, and that as a means to attain this end, as though it were in it self desirable, he leaves them to themselves, blinds their minds, and hardens their hearts, and offers those occasions of, and inducements to sin, which are as stumbling blocks in their way, and that he determined that his providence should be so conversant about the will of man, as that it should be under a natural necessity, or kind of compulsion, to what is evil, without considering the corruption and depravity of nature, as a vicious habit,

which

^f Jer. vi. 30.

^g Jude, Ver. 4, 13.

^h ἀδίκους.

ⁱ 1 Cor. ix. 27. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Heb. vi. 8.

^k 1 Thess. v. 9.

which they had contracted; and that all this is done in pursuance of this decree of Reprobation.

It is very probable that many, who give this account of this doctrine, have no other foundation for it, but the popular out-cry of those who are not apprised of the methods that are generally taken to explain and defend it; or else they suppose that it cannot be defended, without being exposed to those exceptions, which are contained in the account they give of it. But we shall take no farther notice of this, but proceed to explain and defend it another way. And,

I. As to the former branch thereof, namely, *Preterition*, or God's passing by, or rejecting those whom he hath not chosen to salvation, let it be premised; that God, in his eternal purpose, consider'd all mankind as fallen, which must be supposed to have been fore-known by him, otherwise he could not be said to be omniscient, and the result of this fore-knowledge is his determining to leave a part of them in their fallen state, in which he might have left the whole world to perish, without being liable to the least charge of injustice. This is what we call his rejecting them, and accordingly it is opposed to his having chosen the rest to eternal life. These terms of opposition are plainly contained in scripture: thus it is said, *The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded*¹; not by God's leading them into mistakes, or giving them false *Ideas* of things, but they were left to the blindness of their minds, which was the result of their apostacy from God; and elsewhere our Saviour says, *Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes*^m. Thou hast hid, that is, not revealed them, and that either objectively, as respecting those who are destitute of the light of the gospel; or subjectively, as he did not effectually, or savingly, enlighten them with the light of life, by *revealing Christ in them*, as the Apostle calls itⁿ; and therefore it is as though he had said, thou hast determined not to give to some the means of grace, nor to others the saving efficacy thereof, such as they are partakers of, who are chosen to salvation. Accordingly he is said *to have suffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways*^o, that is, not to restrain or prevent the breakings forth of corruption, as he might

have done; and elsewhere, to have *winked at*^p, that is, as it may be render'd, *overlooked* the greatest part of the world, which is no other than his rejecting, or passing them by; and in this sense we are to understand that difficult mode of speaking used by the Apostle, *Whom he will he hardeneth*^q; by which nothing else is intended but his purposing to leave many to the hardness of their own hearts. God forbid that any one should think that there is a positive act contained in those words, as though God infused hardness into the hearts of any; for the meaning is only this, that he determined to deny heart-softening grace to that part of mankind, whom he had not fore-ordained to eternal life. That there was such a purpose relating hereunto, is evident, because whatever God does, in the methods of his providence, is the result of an eternal purpose. This no one, who observes the dispensations of God's providence, and allows, as every one must do, that all that he does was pre-concerted by him, can justly deny.

But that which must be farther enquired into, as to this matter, is, whether God's determining to pass by a part of mankind, be an act of sovereignty, or of justice. And this may also be judged of, by the external dispensations of his providence; so far as there is sovereignty, or justice, visible in them, we are to conclude that this purpose, relating thereunto, was the result of one or the other of these perfections. In some respects, it is an act of sovereignty: As, for instance, that God should give one nation the gospel, or the means, of grace, and deny it to another; it is not because he sees any thing in one part of the world, that obliges him thereunto, more than in the other; but the reason is, as was observed in the scripture but now mentioned, *because it seemed good in his sight*^r. Moreover, his giving special grace, whereby some are effectually called and sanctified; and denying it to others, is an act of sovereign pleasure.

But, on the other hand, God is said sometimes, in the external dispensations of his providence, to leave men to themselves, to give them up to their own heart's lust, in a judicial way, which supposes not only the commission of sin, but persons being obstinate, and resolutely determined to continue in it. Thus God saith concerning his people; Israel

¹ Rom. xi. 7.
ix. 18.

^m Matt. xi. 25.
^r Matt. xi. 26.

ⁿ Gal. i. 16.

^o Acts xiv. 16.

^p Chap. xvii. 30.

^q Rom.

would

Of Pre-damnation, as the Word is taken from Jude, Ver. 4. 245

would none of me; so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels'. And the Psalmist says elsewhere, *Add iniquity to their iniquity*; which words I would rather consider as a prediction than a prayer, or as an expression of the church's acquiescence in God's righteous judgments, which they had ground to conclude, that he would inflict on an impenitent incorrigible people; these are expressed, by adding iniquity to iniquity, not as though he designed to infuse any habit of sin into them; for that is inconsistent with the holiness of his nature, but that he would reject and leave them to themselves, in a judicial way, as a punishment inflicted on them for their iniquities, the consequence whereof would be their own adding iniquity to iniquity. Thus, in different respects, the purpose of God, in passing by a part of mankind, may be consider'd, either as the result of his sovereign pleasure, or as an act of justice.

2. We shall now proceed to consider the other branch of Reprobation, which some call *Pre-damnation*, or (to use the scripture-expression, before refer'd to) God's fore-ordaining those who shall not be saved, to that condemnation, which they shall fall under, as exposing themselves to it by their own wickedness; which is nothing else but his determining, from all eternity, to punish those, as a judge, who should, by their own crimes, deserve it, and thereby to vindicate the holiness of his nature and law. Here let it be observed, that when this doctrine is reproached or misrepresented, it is described as an act of divine sovereignty, but that we are as ready to deny and oppose as they are, since, according to the description we have given of it, it can be no other than an act of justice; for, if to condemn, or punish, be an act of justice, then the decree, relating hereunto, must be equally so, for one is to be judged of by the other. If God cannot punish creatures as such, but as criminals and rebels, then he must be supposed to have consider'd them as such, when, in his eternal purpose, he determined to punish them. No one can stile this an act of cruelty, or severity in God, but those who reckon the punishing of sin to be so, and are disposed to charge the Judge of all with not doing right, or offering an injury to his creatures, when he pours forth the vials of his wrath on them, who, by their bold

and wilful crimes, render themselves obnoxious thereunto.

Here let it be consider'd, that God, in his actual providence, is not the author of sin, though he suffer it to be committed in the world. And, since his permitting, or not hindering it, cannot be said to be the cause of its being committed, there being no cause thereof, but the will of man; it follows, from hence, that God's punishing sin, is not to be resolved into his permission of it, as the cause thereof, but into the rebellion of man's will, as refusing to be subject to the divine law; and thus God consider'd men, when, in his eternal purpose, he determined to condemn those, whose desert of this punishment was foreseen, by him, from all eternity. And is this a doctrine to be so much decry'd?

I cannot but wonder the learned author, whom I have before refer'd to, as opposing this doctrine, should so far give into the common and popular way of misrepresenting it, unless he designed, by this way of opposing it, to render it detested, when he speaks concerning them, mention'd in *Jude, Ver. 4. who were before, of old, ordained to this condemnation*, he says, "This cannot be meant of any divine ordination, or appointment of them, to eternal condemnation, because it cannot be thought, without horror, that God doth thus ordain men to perdition, before they had a being." If he had expressed his horror and resentment against God's ordaining men to perdition, as creatures, it had been just; but to express this detestation against God's ordaining men to perdition, who are described as these are, is to expose this doctrine without reason; and it is still more strange that he should cast this censure upon it, when he owns, in his farther explication of this text, "That God ordaineth none to punishment but sinners, and ungodly men, as these persons here are stiled, and that these were men of whom it was before written, or prophesied, that they should be condemned for their wickedness;" since there is not much difference in the method of reasoning, between saying, that the condemnation of sinners, for their wickedness, was before written, or prophesied, and saying, that God fore-ordained them to eternal punishment.

I am sensible that many are led into this mistake, by supposing that we give a

^c Psal. lxxxv. 11; 12.

^c Psal. lxxx. 27.

^d See Whitby's Paraphrase, &c. on Jude, Ver 4.

245 Rom. ix. 22. and Chap. xi. 7---10. explain'd.

very injurious and perverse sense of that text, in which the doctrine of reprobation is contained, which, it may be, has occasioned this reproach to be cast upon it. For when the Apostle says, in Rom. ix. 22. *What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*, some suppose that we understand this text, as though these vessels of wrath were, from all eternity, prepared for destruction by God, and that his eternal purpose, is his fitting them for it, as intending to bring about that end, viz. his destroying them. But if any have expressed themselves in such a way, as is equivalent thereunto, let them be accountable for their own sense of the text; though this I may say, that some, even of them, who give into the *Supralapsarian* way of explaining the doctrine of Predestination, have not understood it in this sense^{*}; and the sense which I would give of it is this, that those, whom the Apostle speaks of as vessels of wrath, are persons whom God had rejected, and from the foresight of the sins which they would commit, he had appointed them to wrath, which is an expression the Apostle uses elsewhere[†]; but they were appointed to wrath, not as creatures, but as sinners; they are described as fitted to destruction, not by God's act, but their own, and that is the reason of their being fore-ordained to it[‡].

There is another scripture, which is generally cited by those who treat on this subject, that we are to use the utmost caution in explaining, lest we give just occasion, to those who oppose it, to express their abhorrence of it, as inconsistent with the divine perfections, namely, what the Apostle says concerning those that were not elected, whom he calls *the rest of the Jewish nation*, in Rom. xi. 7—10. that *they were blinded*, and that *God had given them the Spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear*; and he speaks of *their table being made a snare*,

and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense to them; let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always. The sense which they, who misrepresent this doctrine, suppose that we put upon this scripture, is, that they, who are reprobated, have, as a consequence thereof, occasions of sin laid in their way, some things designed to blind their minds, cast a mist before their eyes, and so lead them out of the way, and other things, that prove a snare to them, a trap, and occasion of sin, and all this with a design to bring about that damnation which God had ordained for them, in this decree of reprobation, which sense of this scripture never was, nor could be given, by any one, who has a due regard to the divine perfections.

And shall this doctrine be judged of hereby, when it is very hard to find any, how unguarded soever they are in their modes of speaking, that understand this text as they represent it? We shall therefore consider what is probably the meaning of this scripture, with which the doctrine we have laid down is very consistent. It is not to be understood as though God were the author of these sins, which they are said to be charged with; but this blindness and stupidity, which is called, *A Spirit of slumber*, as it is connected with the *Idea* of their being rejected of God, and his determining not to give them the contrary graces, is considered, as the consequence, not the effect thereof, and that not the immediate, but the remote consequence thereof, in the same sense as stealing is the consequence of poverty, in those who have a vicious inclination thereunto. Thus, when a person, who has contracted those habits of sin, that tend to turn men aside from God, is destitute of preventing and restraining grace, the consequence thereof, is, that these corruptions will break forth with greater violence; and God is not obliged to give this grace to an apostate, fallen creature, much less to one who has misimproved the means of grace, by which a multitude of sins might have been pre-

^{*} Thus Beza in loc. calls them *vessels*, because, as creatures, they are the workmanship of God, the great Potter, but vessels prepared for destruction by themselves, and therefore adds, *Existis veras causas minime negem in ipsis vasis latere juxta illud, perditio tua ex te est.*

[†] 1 Thess. v. 9.

[‡] It ought to be observed, that the word, here used, is *κατηρητισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν*, and not *προκατηρητισμένα*; nor is there any thing added to the word, that signifies, that this preparation thereunto was antecedent to their being; or as though it took its rise from God, as the cause of that sin for which he designed to punish them; whereas, on the other hand, when the Apostle, in the following verse, speaks of God's making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, to wit, the elect, they are described as those whom he had afore prepared unto glory, *ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν*. What should be the reason that the Apostle alters the phrase, but that we may hereby be led to consider, that when God chose the elect to glory, they are considered, in his purpose, as those whom he designed, by his grace, to make meet for it? So that the vessels of wrath are considered as fitting themselves for destruction; the vessels of mercy, as persons whom God would first prepare for, and then bring to glory.

vented; so that nothing is intended hereby but this, that they are left to themselves, and permitted to stumble and fall, and to commit those abominations, which, if they had not been thus judicially left, would have been prevented, and, as the consequence thereof, they run into many sins, which they might have avoided; for though we suppose that it is not in a man's own power, as destitute of the grace of God, to bring himself into a regenerate or converted state, (as will be farther consider'd, in its proper place,) nevertheless, we do not deny but that men might, in the right use of the gifts of nature, avoid many sins, which they, who are said to be thus blinded, and harden'd, run into, and so increase their guilt and misery, especially where they are not prevented by the grace of God, which he may, without any impeachment of his providence, deny to those whom he has not chosen to eternal life, as he might, had he pleased, have denied it to the whole world, and much more to those who have not improved the common grace, which they received, but have, through the wickedness of their nature, proceeded from one degree of sin unto another.

There is another scripture, which, some suppose, we understand in such a sense, as gives the like occasion of prejudice to many against this doctrine, in 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*; the meaning whereof is this; that God suffer'd them to be deluded, who, in the following Verse, are represented as not receiving *the love of the truth*; not that God was the author of these delusions, or deceived them by a false representation of things to them, or by exciting or inclining them to adhere to the suggestions of those who lie in wait to deceive; but, since he did not design to give them grace under the means of grace, or to enable them to receive the truth in the love thereof, which he was not obliged to do to any, much less to those who rebelled against the light that had been already given them: Hereupon, through the blindness of their own minds, they became an easy prey to those who endeavoured to ensnare or delude them; so that the decree of God only respects his denying preventing grace to those, who, through the cor-

ruption of their own nature, took occasion, from thence, to run greater lengths in their apostacy from, and rebellion against God. And as for that mode of speaking here used, that *God shall send them strong delusions*, that only respects his will to permit it, and not his design to delude them.

There is another scripture to the same purpose, in Psal. lxxxix. 12. *So I gave them up unto their own heart's lust, and they walked in their own counsels*; the meaning of which is, that God left them to themselves, and then lust, or the corrupt habits of sin, which they had acquired, conceived, and, as the Apostle James speaks, *brought forth sin*^a; or greater acts of sin, which exposed them to a greater degree of condemnation; and all this is to be resolved into God's permissive will, or purpose, to leave man, in his fallen state, to himself, which he might do, without giving occasion to any to say, on the one hand, that he is the author of sin; or, on the other, that he deals injuriously with the sinful creature.

And to this we may add our Saviour's words concerning the Jews, in John xii. 39, 40. *Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and harden'd their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them*. The sense which they, who misrepresent this doctrine, suppose we put upon them, and conclude, that no other is consistent with the argument we are maintaining, is, that the unbelief, which the Jews are charged with, was principally, if not altogether, resolved into God's eternal purpose, to blind their eyes, and harden their hearts, namely, by some positive act, as a cause producing this effect, with this view, that they should not be converted, and saved, that thereby his decree to condemn them might take effect. It is no wonder to find persons prejudiced against this doctrine, when set in such a light; but as this is very remote from the explication we have given thereof, so our Saviour's design, in this text, is to give an account why those miracles, which he wrought before the Jews, were ineffectual for their conviction; the more immediate cause whereof was the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, inasmuch as they had shut their eyes against the light, and, through the corruption of their nature, had har-

248 *The Wicked, how said to be made for the Day of Evil.*

den'd their own hearts. As to what God is said to have done, in a judicial way, agreeable to the mode of speaking here used, when it is said, *He hath harden'd their hearts*, it imports nothing else but his leaving them to the hardness of their own hearts, or denying them heart-softening grace, which would have been an effectual remedy against it. And may not God deny his grace to sinners, without being charged as the author of sin, or the blame thereof devolved on him, and not themselves? And, since this judicial act of providence cannot but be the result of an eternal purpose, is there any thing, in this decree, that reflects on his perfections, any more than there is in the execution thereof?

There is another scripture, in *Prov. xvi. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil*; from whence they infer, that the doctrine of Reprobation, which they suppose to be founded on a perverse sense given of it, includes in it the divine purpose to make man to damn him; for they conclude that we understand it in that sense; and they proceed a little farther than this, and pretend that we infer from it, that God made men wicked, or that he made them wicked for his glory, as if he had need of sinful man for that end. I should never have thought that so vile a consequence could be drawn from this doctrine, if the learned writer, before-mention'd, had not told the world that we infer this from it^b; and, to give countenance to this suggestion, he quotes a passage out of Dr. *Twiss*^c; his words are these: "That all, besides the elect, God hath ordained to bring them forth into the world in their corrupt mass, and to permit them to themselves, to go on in their own ways, and so finally to persevere in sin; and, lastly, to damn them for their sin, for the manifestation of the glory of his justice on them."

I am not ashamed to own my very great esteem of this excellently learned and pious writer, who was as considerable for that part of learning, which his works discover him to have been conversant in, as most in his day; though I cannot think my self obliged, in every respect, to explain this doctrine as he does; and Dr. *Whitby* knew very well, that if such an inference, as what we have been speaking of, were to be deduced from the writings of any, who maintain

the doctrine of reprobation, it must be from one who gives into the *Supralapsarian* way of explaining it; and this expression, which it may be, was a little unguarded, seems to bid as fair for it, as any other he could have found out: But any one that reads it, without prejudice, and especially that compares it with what is connected therewith, would not suppose that any thing is intended hereby, that gives the least ground to conclude that God made men wicked for the manifestation of his justice. The most obnoxious part of this quotation is, *that God ordained to bring forth into the world the non-elect, in their corrupt mass*, that is, that persons, who are every day born into the world, are the seed of corrupt and fallen man, and so have the habits of sin propagated with their nature, which many other divines have endeavoured to maintain. What my sentiments are concerning this matter, I shall rather choose to insist on, under a following *Answer*, in which we shall be led to speak of the doctrine of original sin, and of that corruption of nature, which is the consequence of it; therefore, passing this by, there is nothing, in what remains of this quotation, but what is very defensible, and far from making God the author of sin; for we may observe, that all he says, concerning the providence of God relating to this matter, is only, that he permits, or leaves, them to themselves, and he supposes them finally to persevere in sin, without which they cannot be liable to damnation, or the display of the justice of God therein; and if the author, who brings this quotation, had duly consider'd the words immediately before, he might have seen reason to have saved himself the trouble of making this reflection upon it; for Dr. *Twiss*, who, though a *Supralapsarian*, says, "That he reckons that controversy, relating to the order of God's decrees, to be meerly *Apex Logicus*, as he calls it, a *logical nicety*;" and adds, "That his opinion about it is well known, namely, that God doth not ordain any man to damnation, before the consideration of sin;" and, a few lines after, he says, "That God of his mere pleasure, created all, but of his mere pleasure, he damneth none; but every one that is damned, is damned for his sin, and that wilfully committed, and contumaciously continued in by them that come to ripe years." And if nothing more than this is intended by the doctrine

^b See *Whitby's Discourse*, &c. Pag. 10.

^c See his *Riches of God's love against Hord. Part II. Pag. 50.* of

of reprobation, it ought not to be so misrepresented, with a design to cast an odium upon it.

But to return to the scripture but now mention'd: When God is said to have made the wicked for the day of evil, the meaning is not that man's damnation was the end designed by God, in creating him, for there are some other *Ideas* that intervene between God's purpose to create and condemn him; he must be consider'd not barely as a creature, but as a sinner; now, as God did not create man that he might sin, he could not be said to create him, that he might condemn him. Accordingly, the sense which some give of this text, is, that God is said to have made all things for himself, to wit, for his own glory. And inasmuch as some will be ready to object, that God will have no glory from the wicked, who oppose his name and interest in the world: The Answer to this is; that they, from whom he shall have no glory, as a Saviour, he will, notwithstanding, be glorified in them as a Judge; which judicial act, though it be defer'd for a time, while his long-suffering waits upon them, yet it shall fall heavily on them, in the day of evil; which is very remote from that supposition, that God made man to damn him. And there is a sense given of it by some who are on the other side of the question, which seems equally probable, or agreeable to the mind of the Holy Ghost, and is not in the least subversive of the doctrine we are maintaining, namely, "That the Lord disposeth all things throughout the world, to serve such ends as he thinks fit to design, which they cannot refuse to comply withal; for if any men be so wicked as to oppose his will, he will not lose their service; but, when he brings a publick calamity upon a country, employ them to be the executioners of his wrath: Of this there was a remarkable instance in the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Roman soldiers, whom our Saviour used, to punish his crucifiers, not that they undertook that war out of any design or desire to do our blessed Saviour right, but out of an ambition to enslave the world; yet God made use of them for another design, as publick executioners, by whom he punished the ungodly."

So the *Assyrian* is said, in *Isai. x. 5, 6.* to be the rod of God's anger, and to be sent against the people of Israel, to lead them captive, and therein to tread them down, like the mire in the streets. And as to what concerns the purpose of God, on which these judicial proceedings depend, this is to be judged of by the execution thereof, as it is evidently to be infer'd from thence. And this is the sense in which we understand the doctrine of reprobation, as in the foregoing argument.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove the doctrine of election and reprobation, and defended it from the reproaches and misrepresentations cast upon it, by considering it, not only as agreeable to the divine perfections, but as founded on scripture, we shall therefore proceed,

VI. To enquire whether the contrary doctrine, as defended by some, be not derogatory to the divine perfections, and therefore does not contain greater absurdities; or, if expressions of detestation were a sufficient argument to set it aside, whether we have not as much reason to testify our dislike that way, as they have against the doctrine we are maintaining. As to that part of the charge brought against us, as tho' we represented God as severe and cruel to his creatures, or that it is inconsistent with his goodness to suppose that he leaves any to themselves in their fallen state, so as not to give them the means of grace, when he knew that, being destitute thereof, they could not believe, and so would fall short of salvation, pursuant to his eternal purpose relating thereunto. Can this be said to be inconsistent with his goodness, any more than all his other displays of vindictive justice? If they suppose that it is, we might easily retort the argument upon them, since they will not assert, that the whole race of fallen man shall be saved; and, if so, must we not suppose that God certainly foreknew this, otherwise where is his infinite understanding? And, if he knew that this would be the consequence of their being born, and living in the world, where is his goodness in bringing them into it? If it be said, that they had a free will to choose what is good, and so had a power to attain salvation; therefore their not attaining it, is wholly owing to them-

^d See Bishop Patrick in loc.

^e This agrees with the sense given of it by Grot. in loc. and Whitby in his Discourse, &c. Pag. 11. and it agrees very well with the sense of the Hebrew words, *למען ימנעו* which does not so much signify to make, as to dispose, and adapt one thing to another, which the LXX. render, *φυλάσσειται ὁ ἀσέβης*, &c. the wicked is reserved to the day of evil.

selves. Suppose this were taken for granted, without entering on that subject at present, yet it must be farther enquired, whether they will allow that God fore-knew that they would abuse this freedom of will, or power, to make themselves holy or happy; and, if so, could he not have prevented this? Did he make a will that he could not govern or restrain? Could he not have prevented the sin that he knew they would commit? And if he could, why did he not do it, and thereby prevent their ruin, which he knew would be the consequence hereof? So that if men are disposed to find fault with the divine dispensation, it is no difficult matter to invent some methods of reasoning to give umbrage to it; and, indeed, this objection is not so much against God's fore-ordaining what comes to pass, as it is a spurning at his judicial hand, and finding fault with the equity of his proceedings, when he takes vengeance on sinners for their iniquities, or charging severity on God, because all mankind are not the objects of his goodness, and consequently not elected to eternal life.

But, passing by this, we shall proceed to consider how, in several instances, the methods used to oppose the doctrine, which we are maintaining, are attended with many absurd consequences, derogatory to the divine perfections, which farther discovers the unreasonableness of their opposition to it; particularly,

1. It represents God as indeterminate, or unresolv'd what to do, which is the plain sense of their asserting that he has not fore-ordain'd whatever comes to pass. To suppose him destitute of any determination, is directly contrary to his wisdom and sovereignty, and it would argue that there are some excellencies and perfections belonging to intelligent creatures, which are to be denied to him, who is a God of infinite perfection: But if, on the other hand, they suppose that everything, which comes to pass, is determined by him, nevertheless that his determinations, as they respect the actions of intelligent creatures, are not certain and peremptory, but such as may be disannul'd, or render'd ineffectual, as taking his measures from the uncertain determinations of man's will; this is, in effect, to say, that they are not determined by God; for an uncertain determination, or a conditional purpose, cannot properly be call'd a determination. Thus for God to determine, that he that believes shall be sa-

ved, without resolving to give that faith which is necessary to salvation, is, in effect, not to determine that any shall be saved; for, since they suppose that it is left to man's free will to believe or not; and liberty is generally explain'd by them, as implying that a person might, had he pleased, have done the contrary to that which he is said to do freely, it follows, that all mankind might not have believed and repented, and consequently that they might have missed of salvation, and then the purpose of God, relating thereunto, is the same, as though he had been indeterminate, as to that matter. But if, on the other hand, they suppose that, to prevent this disappointment, God overrules the free actions of men, in order to the accomplishment of his own purpose, then they give up their own cause, and allow us all that we contend for; but this they are not disposed to do; therefore we cannot see how the independency of the divine will can be defended by them, consistently with their method of opposing this doctrine.

Again, if it be supposed, as an expedient to fence against this absurd consequence, that God fore-knew what his creatures would do, and that his determinations were the result thereof, and consequently that the event is as certain as the divine fore-knowledge, this is what is not universally allow'd of by them; for many are sensible that it is as hard to prove, that God fore-knew what must certainly come to pass, without inferring the inevitable necessity of things, as it is to assert that he willed or determined them, whereby they are render'd eventually necessary; and if they suppose that God fore-knew what his creatures would do, and, particularly, that they would convert themselves, and improve the liberty of their will, so as to render themselves objects fit for divine grace, without supposing that he determined to exert that power and grace, which was necessary thereunto, this is to exclude his providence from having a hand in the government of the world, or to assert that his determinations rather respect what others will do, than what he will enable them to do, which farther appears to be inconsistent with the divine perfections.

2. There are some things, in their method of reasoning, which seem to infer a mutability in God's purpose, which is all one as to suppose, that he had no purpose at all relating to the event of things:

Thus,

Thus, in opposing the doctrine of election, they refer to such-like scriptures as these, namely, that *God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*^f; applying this act of the divine will to every individual, even to those who shall not be saved, or come to the knowledge of the truth; and they understand our Saviour's words, *How often would I have gather'd thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*^g, as implying, that God purposed to save them, but was obliged afterwards, by the perverseness of their actions, to change his purpose. What is this, but to assert him to be dependent and mutable?

3. They, who suppose that salvation is not to be resolved into the power and will of God, must ascribe it to the will of man, by which we determine our selves to perform those duties, which render us the objects of divine mercy, and then what the Apostle says, *'Tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy*^h, would hardly be intelligible, or a defensible proposition; and when it is said, *We love him, because he first loved us*ⁱ, the proposition ought to be inverted, and it should rather be said, He loved us, because we first loved him; and that humbling question, which the Apostle proposes, *Who maketh thee to differ*^k? should be answer'd, as one proudly did, I make my self to differ.

4. As to what concerns the doctrine of discriminating grace, which cannot well be maintain'd, without asserting a discrimination in God's purpose relating thereunto, which is what we call election; if this be denied, there would not be so great a foundation for admiration, or thankfulness, as there is, or for any to say, as one of Christ's disciples did, speaking the sense of all the rest, *Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and not unto the world*^l? Nor is there so great an inducement to humility, as what will arise from the firm belief, that, when no eye pitied the poor helpless and miserable sinner, he was singled out of a ruined and undone world, among that remnant whom God first designed for, and then brought to glory.

VII. We shall now consider those methods of reasoning, by which the contrary

doctrine is defended, and enquire into the sense of those scriptures, which are generally brought for that purpose; and shall endeavour to make it appear, that they may be explained in a different way, more consistently with the divine perfections. It is plain, that the main design of those, who oppose the doctrine of election, is to advance the goodness of God; and, since all mankind cannot be said to be equally partakers of the effects of this goodness, inasmuch as all shall not be saved, they suppose that God has put all mankind into a salvable state; and accordingly, as the gospel-overture is universal, so God's purpose to save includes all to whom it is made; but the event, and consequently the efficacy of the divine purpose relating hereunto, depends on the will of man; and, that there may be no obstruction, which may hinder this design from taking effect, God has given him a power to yield obedience to his law, which, though it be not altogether so perfect as it was at first, but is somewhat weaken'd by the fall, yet it is sufficient to answer the end and design of the gospel, that is, to bring him to salvation, if he will, and the event of things is wholly put on this issue; so that, though there be not an universal salvation, there is a determination in God to save all upon this condition. How far this is inconsistent with the divine perfections, has been already consider'd; and we are farther to enquire, whether there be any foundation for it in scripture, and what is the sense of some texts, which are often brought in defence thereof.

One text refer'd to is, those words of the Apostle, in 1 Tim. ii. 4. *Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*; and another scripture, to the same purpose, in 2 Pet. iii. 9. *The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*; and several others, from whence they argue the universality of the divine purpose relating to the salvation of mankind, or that none are rejected, or excluded from it, by any act of God's will, and consequently that the doctrine of election and reprobation is to be exploded, as contrary hereunto.

That the sense of these scriptures cannot be, that God design'd that all men should be eventually saved, or come to the knowledge of the truth, so that none of them should perish, is evident, from many other scriptures, that speak of the de-

struction

^f 1 Tim. ii. 4.
^l John xiv. 22.

^g Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

^h Rom. ix. 16.

ⁱ 1 John iv. 19.

^k 1 Cor. iv. 7.

252 *In what Sense GOD will have all be sav'd, and none perish.*

struction of ungodly men, which, doubtless, will be allowed by all; therefore it follows, that the meaning of these two scriptures, is not that God purposed, or determined, what shall never come to pass, which is inconsistent with the glory of his wisdom and sovereignty, as has been before observed; but they are to be understood with those limitations, which the word *all*, which refers to the persons mentioned, as designed to be saved, is subject to in other scriptures, as will be more particularly consider'd, when we treat of universal and particular Redemption, under a following *Answer*^m; and therefore, at present, we need only observe, that these scriptures may be set in a true light, that the word *all* is oftentimes taken for all sorts of men, or things; as when it is said, that *of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark*ⁿ, that is, all the *Species* of living creatures, not every individual; so^o, in the vision that *Peter* saw of the sheet let down from heaven, in which *there were all manner of four-footed beasts, &c.*^p, so it is said, concerning our Saviour, that he *went about, healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people*^q; and elsewhere God promises, that he *will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh*^r, that is, persons of all ages and conditions, young and old.

There are many instances of the like nature in scripture, which justify this sense of the word *all*; and it seems plain, from the context, that it is to be so taken in the former of the scriptures, but now refer'd to, when it is said, *God will have all men to be saved*; for he exhorts, in *Ver. 1.* that *prayer and supplication should be made for all men*, that is, for men of all characters and conditions in the world, and, in particular, for *kings, and all that are in authority*, and thereby he takes occasion to resolve a matter in dispute among them, whether those kings that were tyrants and oppressors, ought to be pray'd for, when he tells them, that all sorts of men are to be pray'd for; and the reason of this is assigned, namely, *because God will have all men*, that is, all sorts of men, *to be saved*.

Moreover, they whom God will save, are said to be such as *shall come*, that is, as he will bring *to the knowledge of the*

truth. Now it is, certain, that God never designed that every individual should come to the knowledge of the truth; for, if he did, his purpose is not fulfilled, or his providence runs counter to it, for every individual of mankind have not the gospel; therefore it follows, that since God did not purpose that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth, the foregoing words, *Who will have all men to be saved*, are not to be understood in any other sense, but as signifying *all sorts of men*. Neither can it well be proved, whatever may be attempted in order thereto, that the following words, which speak of Christ's being *a Mediator between God and men*, intend, that he performs this office for every individual man, even for those that shall not be saved; for then it would be executed in vain for a great part of them, as will be farther consider'd in its proper place; therefore we must conclude, that, in the former of these scriptures, nothing else is intended, but that God determined to give saving grace to all sorts of men.

And as for the latter, in which the Apostle *Peter* says, that *God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*; there the word *all* is expressly limited, in the context, as referring only to those who are elect and faithful; and therefore he says, including himself among them, that *the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward*. Now if we observe the character which he gives of the church, to which he writes, in the beginning of both his epistles, (which, as he says, in *Ver. 1.* of this *Chapter*, were directed to the same persons) it is as great as is given of any in scripture; and they are distinguished from those profane *scoffers, who walked after their own lusts*, and other ungodly men, whose perdition he speaks of, as what would befall them in the dissolution of the world, by fire, in the day of judgment, and they are described not only as *elect unto obedience*, and as having *obtained like precious faith* with the Apostles, but they were such as God would *keep, through faith, unto salvation*; therefore the Apostle might well say, concerning them, that God determined that none of them should perish, without advancing any thing that militates against the doctrine we are maintaining.

^m See Quest. XLIV.

ⁿ Gen. vii. 8, 9.

^o Acts x. 12.

^p The words are, *πάντα τέτραποδα*, that is, *all four-footed beasts*.

^q Matt. iv. 23. The words are, *θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν*, *every sickness, and every disease*, and so the same words are translated, in *Matt. ix. 35*.

^r Acts ii. 17.

GOD'S Expectation not disappointed by the Will of Man. 253

Object. The Apostle, in this *Verse*, speaks of God, as willing that *all should come to repentance*; therefore they are distinguished from that part of the church, who had obtained, like precious faith, and were included in the character that he gives of some of them, in both his epistles, which infers their being then in a state of salvation; therefore the word *all*, in this text, is not subject to the limitation before mention'd, but must be applied to *all the world*, and consequently the meaning is, that God is not willing that any of mankind should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Answer. The Apostle, in this text, speaks of God's deferring the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, and so exercising his long-suffering towards the world in general, not that he design'd to bring them all to repentance hereby, for that would be to intend a thing which he knew should never come to pass; but the end of his patience, to the world in general, is, that all whom he designed to bring to repentance, or who were chosen to it, as well as to obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, should be brought to it.

There are other arguments, which they bring in defence of their sense of the doctrine of election, as supposing that it is not peremptory, determinate, or unchangeable, and such as infers the salvation of those who are the objects thereof, taken from those scriptures, which, as they apprehend, ascribe a kind of disappointment to God; as when he says, in *Isai. v. 4.* concerning his vineyard, to wit, the church of the *Jews*, *Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes*; and our Saviour's words, in *Luke xiii. 6.* that *he sought fruit on the fig-tree*, meaning the church of the *Jews* in his day, *but found none*; and, speaking concerning *Jerusalem*, he says, in *Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.* *How often would I have gather'd thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*; therefore they conclude, that God's purpose, or design of grace, may be defeated; so that these, and many other scriptures, not unlike to them, are inconsistent with the doctrine of election, as ascertaining the event, to wit, the salvation of those who are chosen to eternal life; which leads us, particularly, to consider the sense thereof.

As to the first of them, in which God says, by the prophet, *What could have*

been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? He condescends therein to speak of himself after the manner of men, as he often does in scripture, and is said to look for what might reasonably have been expected, as the consequence of all the means of grace, which he had vouchsafed to them; the reasonableness of the thing is called his looking for it, as though he should say, it might have been expected, from the nature of the thing, that they, who had been laid under such obligations, should express some gratitude for them, and so have brought forth some fruit, to the glory of God; and those words, which seem to attribute disappointment to him, when 'tis said, *I looked*, &c. signify nothing else but the ingratitude of the people, that they did not walk agreeably to the obligations they were under; not that God was really disappointed, for that would militate against his omniscience: He knew, before he laid these obligations on them, what their behaviour would be; therefore, had he had eyes of flesh, or seen as man seeth, their behaviour would have tended to disappoint him; but there is no disappointment in the divine mind, though the sin reprov'd in the people be the same as though it had had a tendency to defeat the divine purpose, or disappoint his expectation.

As for that other scripture, in which 'tis said, that *he sought fruit on the fig-tree, but found none*, that is, to be explained in the same way, *he sought fruit*, that is, it might reasonably have been expected, but *he found none*, that is, they did not act agreeably to the means of grace they enjoy'd. Therefore neither this, nor the other scripture, does in the least argue, that the purpose of God was not concern'd about the event, or that he did not know what it would be; for, as his providential dispensation gives us ground to conclude, that he determin'd to leave them to themselves, so he knew beforehand that this, through the corruption of their nature, would issue in their unfruitfulness, otherwise he is not omniscient; therefore it follows, that neither of these scriptures have the least tendency to overthrow the doctrine of the certainty and peremptoriness of the divine purpose.

As to what our Saviour says, relating to his willingness, to *have gather'd Jerusalem, as a hen gathereth her chickens un-*

der her wings, but they would not, it may be taken, without the least absurdity attending the sense thereof, as referring to the end and design of his ministry among them, and it is as though he should say, your nation shall be broken, and you scatter'd, as a punishment inflicted on you for your iniquities, and this destruction would have been prevented, had you believed in me; so that all that can be infer'd from hence is, that Christ's ministry and doctrine was attended with that convincing evidence, being confirmed by so many undoubted miracles, that their unbelief was not only charged on them as a crime, but was the occasion of their ruin; or (as it is said in the following words) of their *house's being left unto them desolate*. And this might have been prevented, by their making a right improvement of that common grace, which they had; for though it be not in man's power, without the special influences of divine grace, to believe to the saving of the soul; yet I know no one who denies that it is in his power to do more good, and avoid more evil, than he does, or so far to attend to the preaching of the gospel, as not to oppose it with that malice and envy as the *Jews* did; and, had they paid such a deference to Christ's ministry, as this amounted to, they would not have been exposed to those judgments which afterwards befel them; for it is one thing to say, that men, by improving common grace, can attain salvation, and another thing to conclude, that they might have escaped temporal judgments thereby.

Therefore, if it be enquired; what was God's intention in giving them the gospel? the answer is very plain: It was not that hereby he might bring them all into a state of salvation, for then it would have taken effect; but it was, as appears by the event, to bring those, that should be saved among them, to that salvation, and to let others know, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear; that God had a right to their obedience, and therefore that the message which the Redeemer brought to them, ought to have met with better entertainment from them, than it did. And if it be farther enquired; whether, provided they had believed their ruin would have been prevented? This is an undoubted consequence, from our Saviour's words; but yet it does not follow from hence, that it was a matter of uncertainty with God, whether they should believe or no; for it

is one thing to say, that he would not have punished them, unless they rejected our Saviour; and another thing to suppose that he could not well determine whether they would reject him or no. So that the purpose of God must be consider'd, as agreeing with the event of things, and the design of Christ's ministry, as being what it really was; yet he might, notwithstanding, take occasion to charge the *Jews* destruction upon their own obstinacy.

There are many other scriptures, which they bring to the like purpose, which I pass over, because the sense they give of them differs not much from that, in which they understand the scriptures before-mention'd, and their reasoning from them, in opposition to this doctrine, is the same, and the same answer may be given to it.

However, I cannot but observe, that as, from some scriptures, they attribute disappointment to God, they represent him, from others, as wishing, but in vain, that it had happen'd otherwise, and as being grieved at the disappointment; so they understand those words, in *Psal. lxxxii. 13, 14. Oh! that my people had hearken'd unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries*; and that, in *Luke xix. 42. If, or Oh! that thou hadst known, even thou at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes*.

As for the sense of these, and such-like scriptures, it is no more than this, that the thing which they refused to perform, was, in it self, most desirable, or a matter to be wish'd for, and not that God can be said to wish for a thing that cannot be attained. And when our Saviour laments over *Jerusalem*, as apprehending their destruction near at hand, whether the words are to be consider'd in the form of a wish, that it had been otherwise, or an intimation, that if they had known the things of their peace, their destruction would not have ensued, it is only to be understood as a representation of the deplorableness of their condition, which, with a tenderness of human compassion, he could not speak of, without tears: Yet we are not to suppose that this mode of expression is applicable to the divine will; so that, when the misery of that people is hereby set forth, we are not to strain the sense of words, taken from human modes of speaking, so far, as to suppose that

that the judicial acts of God, in punishing a sinful people, are not the execution of his purpose relating thereunto.

Again, when the Spirit is said to be *grieved*¹, or *resisted*², nothing else is intended hereby, but that men act in such a way, as that, had the Spirit of God been subject to human passions, it would have been matter of grief to him: But far be it from us to suppose that the divine nature is liable hereunto, or that any disappointment can attend his purposes, which has a tendency to excite this passion in men. And when he is said to be resisted, 'tis not meant as though his will, or design, could be render'd ineffectual, but it only implies, that men oppose what the Spirit communicated by the prophets, or in his word: This a person may do, and yet it may be truly said, that *the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations*³.

VIII. We shall proceed to consider several objections that are made against the doctrine we have endeavoured to maintain, and what reply may be given to them; some have been occasionally mention'd under several foregoing *Heads*, and there are others which require a distinct reply.

Object. 1. That the doctrine of absolute Election and Reprobation was altogether unknown by the *Fathers* in the *three first Centuries*; and that it was first brought into the Christian world by *Augustin*; before whose time, the only account we have thereof, is, that God foreknowing who would live piously, or believe and persevere to the end, accordingly predestinated them to eternal life, or determined to pass them by, and so is said to have rejected them⁴.

Ans. This objection, were it literally true, cannot have any tendency to overthrow this doctrine, in the opinion of those, who depend not on the credit of *Augustin*, as defending it, on the one hand, nor are stagger'd by the opposition made to it by some of the *Fathers*, who lived before his time, on the other; and therefore we might have passed it by, without making any reply to it. However, since it contains a kind of insult, or boast, which will have its weight with some, it may be expected that a

few things should be said, in answer to it.

We will not deny but that the *Fathers*, before the *Pelagian* heresy was broach'd in the world, express'd themselves, in many parts of their writings, in so lax and unguarded a manner, concerning the doctrines of predestination, free will, and grace, that, had they lived after those doctrines began to be publickly contested, one would have thought that they had verged too much towards *Pelagius's* side; but, since they were not the subject-matter of controversy in those ages, it is no wonder to find them less cautious in their modes of expressing themselves, than they might otherwise have been; and therefore it is a just observation, which one⁵ makes of this matter, that they had to do with the *Manichees*, and some of the heathen, who supposed that men sinned by a fatal necessity of nature, as though there were no wicked action committed in the world, but some would be ready to excuse it, from the impotency or propensity of human nature to sin, which render'd it, as they supposed, unavoidable; and others took occasion, from hence, to charge God with being the author of sin. It is very probable, the *Fathers*, in those ages, were afraid of giving countenance to this vile opinion, and therefore they were less on their guard, in some respects, than they would have been, had they been to encounter with *Pelagius*, or his followers.

And indeed, *Augustin* himself, before he took occasion to enquire more diligently into the state of this controversy, gave into the same way of expressing his sentiments about the power of nature, or the grace of God, as some other of the *Fathers* had done, and concluded that faith was in our power, as well as a duty incumbent on us, but afterwards retracted such modes of speaking, as the result of more mature deliberation⁶. But, notwithstanding, though he express'd himself in a different way from them, yet he often takes occasion, from some passages which he purposely refers to in their writings, to vindicate them, as holding the same faith, though not always using the same phrases. And, after he had thus defended *Cyprian* and *Ambrose*, in that respect, he puts a very charitable construction on

¹ Eph. iv. 30.

² Acts vii. 51.

³ Psal. xxxiii. 11.

⁴ See *Whitby* of Election, Chap. 5. *Limborch*.

Amic. Collat. Pag. 242.

⁵ Vid. *Sext. Senenf. Bibliothec. Lib. V. Annotat. 101.* Annotavit quidam Chrysostomum interdum naturæ nostræ vires plus æquo extulisse ex contentione disceptandi cum Manichæis & Gentilibus, qui hominem afferebant, vel naturæ malum vel fati violentiâ ad peccandum compelli.

⁶ Vid. *Aug. Retract. I. Cap. 25.*

256 'Tis objected, that the Bounds of Life are not fix'd by God.

their unguarded way of expressing themselves, and says, that this arose from their not having any occasion to engage in that controversy, which was on foot in his day^a. The same might be said of *Gregory Nazianzen*, *Basil*, *Chrysostom*, and several others, whom some modern writers defend from the charge of favouring the *Pelagian* scheme, by referring to some places in their writings, in which they acknowledge, that the salvation of men is owing to the grace of God, whereby all occasions of glorying are taken away from the creature^b, or expressions used by them to the like purpose. And the learned *Vossius*, though he acknowledges, that the *Fathers*, before *Augustin*, express'd themselves in such a way, as is represented in the objection, yet he vindicates them from the charge of verging towards the *Pelagian*, or *Semi-Pelagian* heresy; inasmuch as he concludes, that when they speak of God's predestinating men to eternal life, on the foresight of good works, they only intend those good works, which God would enable them to perform; and this will clear many of those expressions, which they use, from this imputation^c.

But if all these endeavours to establish our claim to those *Fathers*, who lived before *Augustin*, as not being opposers of this doctrine, appear to be to no purpose, yet this will not weaken the truth thereof; for we suppose it to be founded on scripture, and several consequences plainly deduced from it, and therefore it doth not want the suffrage of human testimony to support it.

But if it be said, that this is a very desirable thing, as doubtless it is, we might consider this doctrine, as obtaining very much in, and after *Augustin*'s time, being examined and defended by very considerable numbers of men, who have transmitted it down to posterity, throughout the various ages of the church. Notwithstanding, by whomsoever it is defended, or opposed, we lay no great stress on human authority, as a judicious divine well observes^d. We shall therefore proceed to consider some other objections, which it will be more necessary for us to give a particular answer to.

Object: 2. To the doctrine of God's purpose's ascertaining all events, it is objected; that he has not determined the bounds of the life of man, but that it may be lengthen'd, or shorten'd, by the intervention of second causes. This is nothing else but the applying one branch of this controversy, relating to the decrees of God, to a particular instance. And it was very warmly debated in the *Netherlands*, towards the beginning of the last *Century*^e. This objection is managed in a popular way, and is principally adapted to give prejudice to those who are disposed to pass over, or set aside, those necessary distinctions, which, if duly consider'd, would not only shorten the debate, but set the matter in a clearer light, which we shall endeavour to do; but shall first consider their method of reasoning on this subject, and the sense they give of some scriptures, which, as they suppose, give countenance to this objection.

They therefore thus argue, that if the term of life be immoveably fix'd by God, then it is a vain thing for any one to use those means that are necessary to preserve it, and the skill of the physician, as well as the virtue of medicine, is altogether needless; and the good advice which is often given to persons, to take heed that they do not shorten their lives by intemperance, will be to no purpose; for they have a reply ready at hand, namely, that they shall live their appointed time do what they will. And that, which is still more absurd, is, that if a person attempts to lay violent hands upon himself, it will be to no purpose, if God has determined that he shall live longer; or if he has determined that he shall die, then he is guilty of no crime, for he only fulfils the divine purpose.

They add, moreover, that this not only renders all our supplications to God to preserve our lives, or to restore us from sickness, when we are in danger of death, needless; but our conduct herein is a practical denial of the argument we maintain; for what is this, but to suppose that the bounds of life are not unalterably fixed.

As to what concerns the countenance which, they suppose, scripture gives to

^a Vid. *Aug. de Prædest. Sanct. Cap. 14.* Quid igitur opus est, ut eorum scrutemur opuscula, qui prius quam ista hæresis oriretur, non habuerunt necessitatem in hac difficili ad solvendum quæstione versari: quod proculdubio facerent, si respondere talibus cogerentur.

^b Vid. *Forbes. Instruct. Historico-Theol. Lib. VIII. Cap. 28. §. 16, &c.* & *Joh. Jacobi Hottingeri, Fata Doctrinæ de Prædestinat. Lib. I. §. 35, &c.*

^c Vid. *G. J. Vossii Hist. Pelag. Lib. VI. Thef. 8, 9, 10.*

^d Vid. *Calv. Instit. Lib. III. Cap. 22. §. 1.* Certior est hic Dei veritas, quam ut concutiat, clarior quam ut obruetur hominum autoritate.

^e See the epistles that passed between *Beverovicus*, a physician at *Dort*, and several divines at that time, in *Lib. de Term. vita.* this

this objection, they refer us to those places in which the life of man is said to be lengthen'd or shorten'd; accordingly there are promises of *long life* given to the *righteous, who love God, and keep his commandments*^f; and Solomon says expressly, *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shorten'd*^g; and elsewhere he speaks of the *wicked's dying before their time*^h; and the Psalmist says, that *bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days*ⁱ.

They also refer to that scripture in which *Martha* tells our Saviour, that *if he had been with her brother Lazarus, before his death, he had not died*^k; which either contradicts the argument we are maintaining, or else *Martha* was mistaken, which, had she been, our Saviour would have reprov'd her, for asserting that which was false.

Moreover, they add, that when the old world was destroy'd in the deluge, and so died before their time, they might have prolonged their lives, had they repented in that space of time, wherein *Noah*, as a preacher of righteousness, gave them warning of this desolating judgment, and *Christ*, by his Spirit, in him, preached to them, as the Apostle says^l, which, doubtless, was with a design to bring them to repentance, and save them from this destruction.

And when *Abraham* pleaded with God in the behalf of *Sodom*, God tells him, that *if he found but ten righteous persons in the city, he would spare it for their sake*^m; which is inconsistent with his determination, that they should all die by an untimely death, if the bounds of their lives had been fixed.

And lastly, they refer to that scripture, in which God first told *Hezekiah*, that *he should die, and not live*, and afterwards, that he would *add to his days fifteen years*ⁿ.

Ans. To prepare our way for a reply to this objection, let us consider that the contrary side of the question, which we are maintaining, is equally supported by express texts of scripture: thus 'tis said, *His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass*^o; than which nothing can be more express,

where he speaks concerning that decree of God, which respects all mankind, without exception, and sets forth his absolute sovereignty, and the irreversibility of his purpose herein; and the Apostle *Paul*, in reasoning with the *Athenians*, concerning the decree and providence of God, in whom we live, move, and have our being, says, that *he hath determined the times before appointed, and fix'd the bounds of their habitation*^p. As he has placed men upon the earth, by his decree and providence, so he has determined not only the place where they should live, but the time of their continuance in the world. This was no new doctrine; for the heathen had been instructed in it by their own philosophers, and therefore the Apostle speaks their sense, especially that of the *Stoicks*, about this matter^q. When he mentions the times as determined, 'tis not to be understood of the seasons of the year, which God has fix'd to return in their certain courses, but the seasons appointed for every work, or for every occurrence of life; and, among the rest, the time of life, and of serving our generation therein, as Solomon expressly says, in *Eccl. iii. 1, 2. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose; a time to be born, and a time to die*. Several other scriptures might be brought to the same purpose, as a farther proof hereof, namely, those in which God has foretold the death of particular persons^r.

Moreover, if the providence of God is conversant about all the actions of men, and *the hairs of their head are all number'd*^s; so that the smallest changes in life do not come by chance, but are subject thereto, then certainly the time of life must be subjected to his providence, who is stiled, *Our life, and the length of our days*^t. He must therefore certainly be consider'd as the sovereign Arbiter thereof, which doctrine none, that own a providence, can, with any shadow of reason, gainsay; so that this doctrine is agreeable not only to several scriptures, but to the very nature and perfections of God.

This being premised, we return to the arguments laid down against it, and the

^f Exod. xx. 12. Deut. iv. 40. 1 Kings iii. 14. ^g Prov. x. 27. ^h Eccles. vii. 17. ⁱ Psal. lv. 23.
^k John xi. 21. ^l 1 Pet. iii. 20. ^m Gen. xviii. 32. ⁿ Isai. xxxviii. 1. compared with 5. ^o Job xiv. 5.
^p Acts xvii. 26.
^q Seneca de Consol. ad Marciam, cap. 20. Nemo nimis citò moritur, qui victurus diutius quam vixit non fuit, fixus est cuique terminus manebit semper ubi positus est, nec illum ulterius diligentia aut gratia promovebit. Et Cicero de Senect. Quod cuique temporis ad vivendum datum, eo debet contentus esse. Virg. Æn. X. Stat sua cuique dies: Seru. Fixum est tempus vitæ.
^r 2 Sam. xii. 14. 1 Kings xiv. 12. Chap. xxii. 28. ^s Matt. x. 30. ^t Deut. xxx. 20.

258 GOD's fixing the Bounds of Life farther defended.

Scriptures cited to give countenance to them. 'Tis certain, that two contradictory propositions cannot be both true, in the same sense, and the scriptures, which are exactly harmonious, as well as infallibly true, no where contradict themselves. Therefore we must consider what answer may be given to the objections before-mention'd; and, that our work herein may be shorten'd, we may observe, that the bounds of life are twofold; either such as men might have lived to, according to the common course of nature, if nothing had interven'd to ruin the constitution, or no disease, or violent death, had broke the thread of life before; or that time which God has ordain'd that men shall live, whether it be longer, or shorter: the former of these respects the lengthening or shortening of life, by the influence of second causes; and, in this respect, we don't suppose that the term of life is immoveably fix'd, but that, in some, it is longer, and, in others, shorter; for it is certain, that, by intemperance, or other methods, men may shorten their days; or, by laying violent hands on themselves, not live the time that otherwise they would have done; but, if we consider the over-ruling, or disposing providence of God; as conversant about this matter, there is nothing happens without the concurrence thereof. Therefore persons, who shorten their days by intemperance, do this by the permissive providence of God; though he be not the author of their intemperance, which is sinful, yet he permits, or determines not to hinder it, and consequently though he has fix'd the bounds of life, which can neither be lengthen'd or shorten'd; yet knowing what men will do, in a natural way, to shorten them, he determines that this shall put an end to their lives. And when we read, in scripture, of God's *delivering* him, who dies a violent death, *into his hands*, who is the immediate cause of it, God is not the author of the sin of the murderer; yet providence is not wholly to be exempted from that action, so far as it is not sinful, but purely natural, or the effect of power; and, when this is said to have a tendency to shorten the life of man, it does not detract from the time that he had in his own purpose affix'd to it. We must also consider, that his decree and providence respects the means, as well as the end, which are always inseparably connected, and equally subject thereunto.

These things being premised, we proceed more particularly to answer the arguments brought against this doctrine. And,

1. When it is said, that God's fixing the bounds of life, renders all means for the preservation thereof unnecessary, that depends upon a false supposition, namely, that God does not ordain the means as well as the end. If God has determined that persons shall live, he has determined to give them the supports of life, and to prevent every thing that might tend to destroy it; so, on the other hand, when he takes them away, by a disease, this is ordain'd by him, as a means conducive thereunto: If health is to be supported, or recover'd, by means, and thereby life preserved, God has ordained that these means shall be used, as well as the end attained.

2. As to persons shortening their lives by intemperance, this has a natural tendency to do it; so that, tho' God be not the author of the sin, he certainly knows, before-hand, what methods the sinner will take to hasten his end, and leaves him to himself; so that, though the sin be not from God, the punishment, which is the consequence thereof, may truly be said to be from him, and therefore this was determined by him.

And when it is farther objected, that they, who destroy their health, or lay violent hands on themselves, cannot be said to sin in so doing, because they do that which tends to fulfil the divine will, provided God has determined this fatal event, herein they oppose this doctrine, without taking the words in the same sense in which it is maintained; for 'tis well known, that the will of God is sometimes taken for that prescribed rule that he has given us, which is the matter of our duty, in which sense we readily allow, that he that fulfils it, cannot be said to sin. But, besides this, it is sometimes taken for his purpose to permit sin; or, to give the sinner up to his own heart's lusts, to act that which he hates, and is resolved to punish. In this sense, the sinner is said to do that which God would not have suffer'd him to do, had he will'd the contrary; but it is a very groundless insinuation, to suppose that this exempts him from the guilt of sin.

3. To say, that God's fixing the bounds of life, is inconsistent with our praying, that our lives may be prolonged, or that we may be deliver'd from sickness, or

death,

death, when we are apprehensive that we are drawing nigh to it, is no just consequence; for as we don't pray that God would alter his purpose, when we desire any blessing of him, but suppose this to be hid from us, and expect not to know it any otherwise than by the event; so a person, who prays to be deliver'd from sickness, or death, is not to address the divine Majesty, as one who presumptuously, and without ground, supposes that God has decreed that he shall immediately die, but as one who hopes, or who has no ground to conclude otherwise, but that he will make it appear, by answering his prayer, that he has determined to spare his life. For the secret purpose of God, relating to the event of things, is no more to be a rule of duty, inasmuch as 'tis secret, than if there had been no purpose relating thereunto; but yet it does not follow from hence, that this matter is not determined by him.

4. As to those scriptures, that seem to give countenance to this objection, they may, without the least absurdity, be understood consistently with other scriptures, which have been before produced, whereby 'tis proved, that God has fixed, or determined the bounds of life. As for those *promises*, which God has made of a long life, *to those that love him, and keep his commandments*, the meaning thereof is this, that he will certainly bestow this blessing, either in kind or value, on those whose conversation is such as is therein described; this none can deny, who rightly understand the meaning of that scripture, in which it is said, that *godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come* *. But, so far as it affects the argument we are maintaining, we must consider, that that efficacious grace, whereby we are enabled to love God, and keep his commandments, is as much his gift, and consequently the result of his purpose, as the blessing connected with it; therefore if he has determined that we shall enjoy a long and happy life in this world, and to enable us to live a holy life therein; if both the end and the means are connected together, and are equally the objects of God's purpose, then it cannot justly be infer'd from hence, that the event, relating to the lengthening or shortening our lives, is not determined by him.

As for those scriptures that speak of the wicked's dying before their time, or

not living half their days, these are to be understood agreeably to that distinction before mention'd, between mens dying sooner, than they would have done, according to the course of nature, or the concurrence of second causes thereunto, in which sense it is literally true, that many do not live out half their days; and their dying sooner than God had before determin'd. May not the sovereign Disposer of all things inflict a sudden and immediate death, as the punishment of sin, without giving us reason to conclude that this was not pre-concerted, if we may so express it, or determined before-hand?

As for that other scripture, refer'd to in the objection, in which *Martha* tells our Saviour, that if he had been with *Lazarus*, when sick, *he had not died*, she does not suppose that Christ's being there, would have frustrated the divine purpose, for then he would, doubtless, have reproved her for it; whereas, in reality, he did not come to visit him, because he knew that God had purposed that he should die, and be afterwards raised from the dead; so that this does not argue that he has not fixed the bounds, or term of life.

Again, as for that argument, to support this objection, taken from the destruction of the world in the flood; or that of *Sodom*, by fire from heaven, that they might have prolonged their lives, had they repented, we do not deny but that this would have been the consequence thereof, but then their repentance would have been as much determined by God, as their deliverance from that untimely death, which befel them.

The last scripture mention'd, in which God, by the prophet *Isaiah*, tells *Hezekiah*, that *he should die, and not live*; notwithstanding which, fifteen years were added to his life, which is very frequently insisted on, by those who deny the unalterable decree of God, relating to life and death, as that which they apprehend to be an unanswerable argument to support it. To this it may be reply'd, that when God says, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live*, he gave *Hezekiah* to understand, that his disease was what we call mortal, namely, such as no skill of the physician, or natural vertue of medicine, could cure, and therefore that he must expect to die, unless God recovered him by a miracle; and *Hezekiah*, doubtless, took the warning in this sense, otherwise it would have

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

260 GOD'S Decrees, and Stoical Fate, how they differ.

been a preposterous thing for him to have pray'd for life, as it would have been an affront to God, to have desired him to have changed his purpose. But God, on the other hand, designed, by this warning, to put him upon importunate prayer for life; therefore when he says, *I will add to thy days fifteen years*, the meaning is only this, though thou mightest before have expected death, my design in giving thee that intimation, was, that thou should'st pray for life, which might be given thee by a miracle; and now I will work a miracle, and fulfil, in this respect, what I before purposed, in adding to thy life fifteen years.

Object. 3. It is farther objected, against the doctrine of election and reprobation, and particularly the immutability of God's purpose therein, that it tends to establish a fatal necessity of things, and overthrow that known distinction that there is between things, as necessary, or contingent, as tho' nothing in the whole series of causes and effects could happen otherwise than it does, and God himself were confined to such a method of acting, that it was impossible for him to have done the contrary; which is nothing else but the *Stoical* doctrine of fate applied to, and defended by some scriptures, though it be contrary to others, which speak of the uncertainty of future events. Thus God speaks of the *Jews*, turning from their iniquities, and his bestowing pardoning mercy, as the result thereof, as an uncertain event, when he says, in *Jer. xxxvi. 3.* *It may be that the house of Judah will bear all the evil, which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.* So when God gave the *Jews* a sign, immediately before the captivity, taken from the prophet *Ezekiel's* personating one that was removing his stuff, or household goods, as signifying, that the nation in general should soon remove to other habitations, when carried captive into *Babylon*, he adds, upon this occasion, *It may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house*^v. And the prophet *Zephaniah* exhorts the people to *seek righteousness and meekness*, and, as the consequence thereof, says, *It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger*^z. And the Apostle speaks of the uncertainty of the divine dispensations of grace, when he advises *Timothy*, in meekness, to

instruct those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth^a; which is directly contrary to the unalterable necessity of events, depending upon the divine purpose, according to this doctrine of election.

Ans. 1. As to the former part of this objection, in which this doctrine is pretended to have taken its rise from, and to be agreeable to that of the *Stoicks*, concerning fate and destiny, it will not be much to our purpose to enquire what was the opinion of that sect of philosophers concerning it; and, indeed, it will be difficult to fix on a just sense thereof, in which they all agree. Some are of opinion, that many of them intended nothing else thereby, but the immutability of God's purposes, and the dispensations of his providence, being a necessary execution thereof; and that when he is said to be bound by the laws of fate, they mean, that he cannot act contrary to what himself has determined^b. And, had it been universally explain'd by them in this sense, it would not have done them much service, who oppose the doctrine of election, to have compared it therewith; for it would only have proved the agreeableness of the doctrine of the immutability of God's purpose, relating to all events, to the light of nature, as some of the heathen were thereby instructed in it. But since this does not appear to be the sense of all the *Stoicks* about the doctrine of fate, but some of them understood it in the same sense as it is represented in the objection, this we cannot but militate against, and assert the doctrine of election to be very remote from it.

Therefore we need only, in answer to this part of the objection, explain what we mean, when we maintain the necessity of events, as founded on the will of God. We are far from asserting that there is a necessary connection between second causes, and their respective effects, in which some are produced arbitrarily, by the will of intelligent creatures; and when we call any thing a necessary cause, producing effects, according to its own nature, we suppose that this is agreeable to the order, or course of nature, which was fixed by God; all that we pretend to prove, is the dependence of things on the divine will, and the necessity of God's purposes taking effect; so that that which

^v Ezek. xii. 3.

^z Zeph. ii. 3.

^a 2 Tim. ii. 25.

^b Vid. *Senec.* de Prov. cap. 5. *August.* de Civ. Dei, Lib. V. cap. 1. & 8. *Lips.* Phys. Stoic. Lib. I. Diff. 12.

is arbitrary or contingent, which might be, or not be, as depending on, or relating to second causes, is eventually necessary, as it is an accomplishment of the divine purpose. Therefore we always distinguish between things being contingent, with respect to us, and their being so, with respect to God; and consequently, though *it may be*, or *peradventure*, may be applied to the apparent event of things, these words can never be applied to the fulfilling of the divine will; and this leads us to consider the latter part of the objection; therefore,

2. As to the scripture's speaking concerning the uncertainty of future events, in those places mention'd in the objection, these, and all others of the like nature, in which such a mode of speaking is used, may be explained, by distinguishing between what might reasonably have been expected to be the event of things, supposing men had not been given up to the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, to act below the dictates of reason, without consulting their own safety and happiness, or expressing their gratitude to God; and what would be the real event of things, which God was not pleased to reveal, and therefore was unknown to them. Thus, when the prophets *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel* represented the repentance and reformation of *Israel*, as an uncertain event, as well as their forgiveness, and deliverance from the captivity, connected with it, in such dubious terms, *It may be they will consider and return, every man from his evil way*, it implies, that this was what might have been reasonably expected by men, though it was no matter of uncertainty to the heart-searching God, who knoweth the end from the beginning, and perfectly foresees what will be the event of things, which, in various respects, are under the direction of his providence; though it could hardly be thought, by men, that such an admonition should be treated with such contempt, yet God knew how they would behave themselves; there was no *peradventure* with respect to his judgment thereof; he knew that they would not repent, otherwise he would have inclined their wills, and effectually have persuaded them to exercise this grace, and thereby have prevented his expectation, or determination, from being disappointed, or frustrated.

If it be objected, that, according to this sense of the text, the prophet's message to the people would have been to no

purpose, and his ministry, among them, exercised in vain; or that it was contrary to the wisdom and goodness of God to make this overture to them, when he knew it would not be comply'd with.

To this it may be reply'd, that the great God is not bound to decline the asserting his right to man's obedience, or requiring that which is a just debt to him, though he knew that they would not comply with his demand thereof; and, indeed, this objection cannot be maintained, without supposing, that, when the gospel is preached to man, the glory of the divine wisdom and goodness therein cannot be secured, unless we conclude either that God doth not know whether man will embrace it, or no, which is contrary to his omniscience, or that he determines, that all, to whom the gospel is preached, shall embrace it, which is contrary to matter of fact. But there may be a medium between both these, which vindicates the divine perfections, in ordering that the gospel should be preached, and thereby asserting his sovereignty, and unalienable right to their obedience; accordingly, there might be a small remnant among them, in whom God designed that this message should take effect. And will any one say, that because the goodness of God was not herein demonstrated to all, that therefore no glory was brought to that perfection?

And if it be farther said, that supposing there were some who turn'd from their evil ways, the captivity, which was threaten'd, was not hereby prevented, and therefore the promise, relating thereunto, did not take place. To this it may be replied; that as God did not give them ground to expect this blessing, unless this repentance should be more universal, than it really was, so he had various ways to testify his regard to those who should receive advantage by this message, for whose sake it was principally intended.

As for that other scripture, in which God advises his people to *seek righteousness and meekness*, and, as the consequence hereof, says, *it may be ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger*; the meaning is, that they, who were enabled to exercise these graces, should either have some instances of temporal deliverance vouchsafed to them; or, if not, that they should have no reason to complain that the exercise thereof was altogether in vain.

262 *Objections against the Doctrine of Election answer'd.*

As for that scripture, in which the Apostle bids *Timothy* to exhort those that oppose the gospel, *if, peradventure, God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*; the meaning is, that it was uncertain to *Timothy* whether God would give this grace or no; and therefore he must preach the gospel, whatever were the event thereof: Nevertheless, it was no matter of uncertainty, with respect to God, who must be supposed to know what grace he designs to bestow, and therefore the event of things may be dubious to us, and yet be certain with respect to him.

Object. 4. Another objection, against the doctrine of Election and Reprobation, is, that 'tis altogether inconsistent with the preaching of the gospel; for if God has determined the final state of man, so that his purpose cannot be alter'd, then it is a preposterous thing, not to say illusory, for grace to be offer'd to the chief of sinners, which must certainly argue, that it is possible to be attained by them; and, since the overture is universal, we must conclude that God has put all mankind into a salvable state, and consequently not excluded any from salvation by his peremptory and unchangeable decree. To what purpose are the promises of the gospel held forth, to all that sit under the sound thereof, if it be impossible for them to attain the blessings promised therein? Or what regard could men be supposed to have to the promises, if they were not a declaration of God's purpose? And, on the other hand, the threatenings denounced would be as little regarded, as an expedient to deter men from sinning, if their state were unalterably fixed by God, according to this doctrine of Election, as it has been before consider'd.

Ans. That we may proceed with greater clearness in answering this objection, we shall first shew what we mean by preaching the gospel, which is nothing else but a declaration of God's revealed will, and our duty pursuant thereunto, which is to be made known, particularly what is contained in the word of God, relating to the salvation of men, and the way which he has ordained in order to their attaining it. Therefore,

1. When this salvation is said to be offer'd in the gospel, we intend nothing else thereby, but that a declaration is made to sinners, that there are many invaluable privileges which Christ has purchased for, and will, in his own time and

way, apply to all those whom God has purposed to save; and, since we cannot describe them by name, and no unregenerate person has ground to conclude that he is of that number, therefore there is a farther declaration to be made, namely, that God has inseparably connected this salvation, which he has chosen them to, with faith and repentance, and the exercise of all other graces, which, as they are God's gift, and to be pray'd for, and expected, in a diligent attendance on all his ordinances, so they are to be consider'd as the marks and evidences of their being chosen to salvation, without which, 'tis certainly a vain and presumptuous thing for any one to pretend that he has a right to it, as the object of God's eternal election.

2. No one, who preaches the gospel, has any warrant from God to tell any individual person that, whether he repents and believes, or no, he shall be saved; or, to direct his discourse to him, as one that is chosen thereunto, much less to give the impenitent sinner occasion to conclude, that, though he obstinately, and finally, remain in a state of rebellion against God, notwithstanding he may hope to be saved, because there is a number of mankind chosen to salvation; for this is not to declare God's revealed will, but that which is directly contrary to it, and therefore not to preach the gospel. Therefore,

3. All, who sit under the sound of the gospel, ought to look upon it as a declaration of God's design to save a part of mankind, under the preaching thereof, and among them the chief of sinners, which they have sufficient ground to conclude themselves to be; but yet a door of hope is so far open'd hereby, that they have no reason to conclude that they are rejected, any more than that they are elected; and, while they wait on God's instituted means of grace, they have, at least, this encouragement, that, peradventure, they may be of the number of God's elect; and, when they find in themselves that faith, which is the evidence thereof, then they may determine their interest in, and lay claim to this privilege, when they are enabled to make their calling, and thereby their election sure.

And as for the promises and threatenings, these are to be consider'd by unregenerate persons, without determining their right to the one, or falling under the other, as elected or rejected; for that

Objections against the Doctrine of Election answer'd. 263

is still supposed to be a secret; therefore they are to regard the promise, as a declaration of God's purpose, relating to the connection that there is between faith and salvation, as an inducement to perform the one, in expectation of the other. And as for the threatenings, though they determine the present state of impenitent sinners to be such, in which they are undone and miserable, yet they are not to be extended to those events, which are hid in the purpose of God, so as to give any one ground to conclude that he is hereby finally excluded from salvation, since such an exclusion as this is inseparably connected with final impenitency and unbelief.

Object. 5. It is farther objected, that this doctrine is, in many instances, subversive of practical religion. And,

1. That it is inconsistent with the duty of prayer; for if God has determined to save a person, what need has he to ask a blessing, which is already granted? and, if he has determined to reject him, his prayer will be in vain.

2. It is farther supposed, that it leads to presumption, on the one hand, or despair on the other; Election, to presumption; Reprobation, to despair. And,

3. They add, that it leads to licentiousness, as it is inconsistent with our using endeavours that we may be saved; for to what purpose is it for persons to strive to enter in at the strait gate, when all their endeavours will be ineffectual, if they are not elected? or to what purpose is it for persons to use any endeavours to escape the wrath of God, due to sin, if they are appointed to wrath, and so must necessarily perish?

Ans. w. This objection is, beyond measure, shocking; and it is no wonder, that a doctrine, that is supposed to have such consequences attending it, is treated with the utmost degree of detestation: But as the greatest part of the objections against it, are no other than misrepresentations thereof, so it is no difficult matter to reply to them, to the conviction of those who are disposed to judge impartially of the matter in controversy between us; we shall therefore proceed to reply to the several branches of this objection. And,

1. As to what concerns the duty of prayer; when we are engaged in it, we are not to suppose that we are to deal with God, in such a way, as when we have to do with men, whom we suppose to be undetermined, and that they are to be moved, by intreaties, to alter their pre-

sent resolutions, and to give us what we ask for, for that is to conceive of him as altogether such a one as our selves; accordingly, we are not to conclude, that he has not determined to grant the thing that we are to pray to him for; for that would be presumptuously to enter into his secret purpose, since he has nowhere told us we shall be denied the blessings we want; but rather, that there is forgiveness with him, and mercy for the chief of sinners, as an encouragement to this duty; and, besides this, has given us farther ground to hope for a gracious answer of prayer, where he gives a heart to seek him. Therefore we are to behave our selves, in this duty, as those who pretend not to know God's secret purpose, but rather desire to wait for some gracious intimation, or token, for good, that he will hear and answer our prayer; therefore his secret purpose is no more inconsistent with this duty, than if, with those that deny the doctrine we are maintaining, we should conclude that this matter is not determined by him.

2. As to this doctrine's leading to presumption, or despair, there is no ground to conclude that it has a tendency to either of them. It cannot lead to presumption, inasmuch as election is not discover'd to any one till he believes; therefore an unconverted person has no ground to presume and conclude, that all is well with him, because he is elected; for that is boldly to determine a thing that he knows nothing of; the objection therefore, with respect to such, supposes that to be known, which remains a secret. And, on the other hand, they have no ground to despair, on a supposition that they are finally rejected; for it is one thing to be in a state of unregeneracy, and another thing to be the object of the decree of Reprobation, which no one can, or ought to determine, concerning himself, so long as he is in this world, much more if we consider him as enjoying the means of grace, and a door of hope is open to him therein; and God has pleased to declare, in the gospel, that he will receive sinners that repent and believe in him, how unworthy soever they are; therefore such are not to conclude that their state is desperate, though it be exceeding dangerous, but to wait for the efficacy of the means of grace, and those blessings that accompany salvation.

And as for those that are in a converted state, this doctrine is far from having a tendency,

264 *Objections against the Doctrine of Election answer'd.*

tendency, either to lead them to presumption, or despair; but, on the other hand, to thankfulness to God, for his discriminating grace, which, when persons experience, they are not only encourag'd to hope for farther blessings, but to perform those duties, whereby they may express their gratitude to him. As for presumption, which is the only thing that Election is pretended to lead them to, that cannot be the natural consequence or tendency thereof; for if they presume that they shall be saved, this is not to be reckon'd a crime in them; for that presumption, which is supposed to be so in the objection, consists in a person's expecting a blessing without reason; but this is contrary to the supposition that he is a believer; and it would be a strange method of reasoning to infer, that he, who has ground to conclude that he has a right to eternal life, from those marks and evidences of grace, which he finds in himself, is guilty of a sinful presumption, when he is induced hereby to lay claim to it; and therefore the sense of the objection must be this, that a believer, having been once enabled to conclude himself elected, may, from hence, take occasion, supposing that his work is done, and his end answer'd, to return to his former wicked life, and yet still presume that he shall be saved; whereas that would be a certain indication that he had no ground to conclude this, but was mistaken, when he thought that he had; so that this doctrine cannot lead a believer, as such, to presumption, and consequently the objection, in which it is supposed that it does, is founded on one of these two mistakes, *viz.* that every one, who is elected to salvation, knows his interest in this privilege, as tho' it were immediately reveal'd to him, without infering it from any marks and evidences of grace that he finds in himself; or else, that it is impossible for any one, who thinks that he believes, and, from thence, concludes that he is elected, to appear afterwards to have been mistaken in the judgment, which he then pass'd upon himself: But either of these contain a misrepresentation of the consequences of the doctrine of Election; neither is there any regard had to that necessary distinction that there is, between a person's being chosen to eternal life, and his being able to determine himself to be interested in this privilege; and it is contrary to what we have before consider'd, that whenever

God chooses to the end, he chooses to the means, which are inseparably connected with it, which is the only rule whereby we are warranted, when applying it to our selves, to conclude that we shall be saved.

3. It cannot, in the least, be proved, that this doctrine has any tendency to lead persons to licentiousness; nor is it inconsistent with our using the utmost endeavours to attain salvation. If it be said, that many vile persons take occasion, from hence, to give the reins to their corruption, that is not the natural, or necessary consequence thereof; since there is no truth but what may be abused. The Apostle *Paul* did not think the doctrine of the grace of God, which he so strenuously maintain'd, was less true, or glorious, because some drew this vile consequence from it, *Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound* ^c.

And as for those means, which God has ordain'd to bring about the salvation of his people, we are obliged to attend upon them, though we know not, before-hand, what will certainly be the event thereof; and if, thro' the blessing of God accompanying them, we are effectually called and sanctified, and thereby enabled to know our Election, this will (agreeably to the experience of all true believers) have a tendency to promote holiness.

Object. 6. It is farther objected, and that more especially against the doctrine of Reprobation, that it argues God to be the author of sin; and particularly in such instances as these, *viz.* with respect to the first entrance of sin into the world, and in God's imputing the sin of our first parents to all their posterity, and afterwards suffering it to make such a progress as it has done ever since; and, most of all, when it is supposed that this is not only the result of the divine purpose, but that it also respects the blinding mens minds, and hardening their hearts, and so rendering their final impenitency and perdition unavoidable.

Ans. To this it may be answer'd,

1. As to what concerns the first entrance of sin into the world, it cannot reasonably be denied, that the purpose of God was concern'd about it, before it was committed, in the same sense as his actual providence was afterwards, namely, in permitting, though not effecting it, notwithstanding this was not the cause of the committing it, since a bare permission has no positive efficiency in order there-

^c Rom. vi. 1.

unto; the not hindering, or restraining a wicked action, does not render him the author of it. 'Tis true, God knew how man would behave himself, and particularly, that he would mis-improve and forfeit that original righteousness, in which he was created, and that, by this means, he would contract that guilt, which was the consequence thereof, and thereby render himself liable to his just displeasure; to deny this, would be to deny that he fore-knew that, from eternity, which he knew in time. And, so far as the actual providence of God was conversant about what was natural therein, so far his purpose determined that it should be; but neither does this argue him to be the author of sin. But this will be farther consider'd, when we speak concerning the actual providence of God under a following Answer^d.

2. As to that part of the objection, which respects the imputing the sin of our first parents to all their posterity, that is more frequently brought against this doctrine than any other; and it is generally represented in the most indefensible terms, without making any abatements as to the degree of punishment that was due to it; and accordingly they think that we can hardly have the front to affirm, that our arguments, in defence hereof, are agreeable to the divine perfections, as we pretend those others are, which have been brought in defence of this doctrine: But, I hope, we shall be able to maintain the doctrine of *Original Sin*, in consistency with the divine perfections, as well as scripture, in its proper place, to which we shall refer it^e. Therefore all that I shall add, at present, is, that if the doctrine of original sin be so explain'd, as that it does not render God the author of sin, his purpose relating thereunto, which must be supposed, in all respects, to correspond with it, does not argue him to be the author of it.

3. As to the progress of sin in the world, and the proneness of all mankind to rebel against God, this, as before was observed, concerning sin in general, is the object of his permissive, but not his effective will; though there is this difference between God's suffering sin to enter into the world at first, and his suffering the continuance, or increase of it therein, that, at first, he dealt with man as an innocent creature, and only left him to the mutability of his own will, having before given him a power to retain his

integrity: But the fallen creature is become weak, and unable to do any thing that is good in all its circumstances, and afterwards is more and more inclin'd to sin, by contracting vicious habits, and persisting therein. Now, though God's leaving man to himself at first, when there was no forfeiture made of his preventing grace, must be reckon'd an act of mere sovereignty, his leaving sinners to themselves may be reckon'd an act of justice, as a punishment of sin before committed, and neither of these argue him to be the author of it; neither does the purpose of God, relating thereunto, give the least occasion for such an inference.

Again, we must distinguish between the occasion and the cause of sin. God's providential dispensations, though unexceptionably holy and righteous, are often-times the occasion thereof: thus his afflictive hand sometimes occasions the corruptions of men to break forth, in repining at, and quarrelling with his providence, and his giving outward blessings to one, which he with-holds from another, gives occasion, to some, to complain of the injustice of his dealings with them; and the strictness, and holiness of his law, gives occasion, to corrupt nature, to discover it self in the blackest colours; the Apostle plainly evinces this truth, when he says, *Sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence^f*; and, indeed, there is nothing in the whole compass of providence, or in the methods of the divine government therein, but what may be, and often is, an occasion of sin in wicked men: But certainly it is not the cause of it; even as the clemency of a prince may occasion a rebellion among his subjects; but it is the vile ingratitude, and wickedness of their nature, that is the spring and cause thereof; so the providence, and consequently the purpose of God, which is executed thereby, may be the occasion of sin, and yet the charge brought in this objection, as though God hereby was argued to be the author of sin, is altogether groundless.

4. As to what is farther objected, relating to the purpose of God, to blind the minds, and harden the hearts of men, and that final impenitency, which is the consequence thereof, God forbid that we should assert that this is a positive act in him; and, so far as it contains nothing else but his determining to deny that

^d See Quest. XVIII.

^e See Quest. XXI, XXII.

^f Rom. vii. 8.

266 *Objections against the Doctrine of Election answer'd.*

grace, which would have had the contrary effect, or his providence relating thereunto, this does not give any countenance to the objection, or weaken the force of the arguments that we have before laid down, which are very consistent therewith.

Object. 7. There is another objection, which is generally laid down in so moving a way, that, whether the argument be just or no, the stile is adapted to affect the minds of men with prejudice against this doctrine, and that is taken from the inconsistency thereof with God's judicial proceedings against the wicked in the day of judgment, and that it will afford the sinner a plea, in which he may say to this effect: Lord, I sinned by a fatal necessity; it was impossible for me to avoid that which thou art now offended with me for; it was what thou didst decree should come to pass. I have been told, that thy decrees are unalterable, and that it is as possible to change the course of nature, or to remove the mountains, which thou hast fixed with thy hand, as to alter thy purpose; wilt thou then condemn one, who sinned and fell pursuant to thy will? Dost thou will that men should sin and perish, and then lay the blame at their door, as though they were culpable for doing what thou hast determined should be done?

Ans. This objection supposes, that the decree of God lays a necessary constraint on, and enforces the will of man to sin, which, if they could make it appear that it does, no reply could be made to it. But this is to represent the argument we are maintaining in such a way, in which no one, who has just *Ideas* of this doctrine, would ever understand it, and it is directly contrary to the foregoing method of explaining it. We have already proved, in our *Answer* to the *third Objection*, that sin is not necessary in that sense, in which they suppose it to be, or that, though the decree of God renders events necessary, yet it does not take away the efficiency of second causes, and therefore the purpose of God, relating thereunto, is not to be pleaded, as an excuse for it, or as a ground of exemption from punishment. We read of the *Jews*, that, *with wicked hands, they crucified our Saviour*; the crime was their own; but yet this is expressly said to have been done by, or in pursuance of, *the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*^s. He fore-knew what they would do, and pur-

posed not to prevent it; but yet he did not force their will to commit it; and elsewhere God says, concerning *Israel*, *Thou heardst not; yea, thou knewest not, from that time thine ear was not opened*; and then he adds, *I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously*^h. *Israel* might as well have pleaded, that God knew, before-hand, how they would behave themselves, and so have thrown the blame on him, for not preventing this fore-seen event, but suffering them to go on in this destructive way, with as much reason, as the sinner is supposed, in the objection, to have, when taking occasion so to plead, as he is represented, as having ground to do, in the day of judgment, as a consequence from the doctrine we are maintaining.

Again, whatever has been said concerning the immutability of the divine purpose, yet this does not give the least countenance to any one's charging his sin on God; as we have, in answer to the last objection, proved, that it does not render him the author of sin; and therefore man's destruction must lie at his own door. It is one thing to say, that it is in the sinner's power to save himself, and another thing to say, that the sin he commits is not wilful, and therefore that guilt is not contracted thereby; and, if so, then this affords no matter of excuse to the sinner, according to the import of the objection.

IX. We are now to consider some things that may be infer'd from the doctrine we have been insisting on, and how it is to be practically improved by us, to the glory of God, and our spiritual advantage. And,

I. From the methods taken to oppose and decry it, by misrepresentations, which contain little less than blasphemy, we infer, that however unjust consequences deduced from a doctrine, may be an hindrance to its obtaining in the world; yet this method of opposition will not render it less true, or defensible; nor ought it to prejudice the minds of men against the sacred writings, or religion in general. We cannot but observe, that while several scriptures are produced in defence of this doctrine, and others in opposition to it, and the utmost cautions have not been used to reconcile the sense given thereof with the natural *Ideas* which we have of the divine perfections; and many, in defending one side of the question, have

^s Acts ii. 23.

^h Isai. xlviii. 8.

The practical Improvement of the Doctrine of Election. 267

made use of unguarded expressions, or called that a scripture-doctrine which is remote from it; and others, in opposition hereunto, have, with too much assurance, charged the defenders thereof with those consequences, which are neither avowed by them, nor justly deduced from their method of reasoning. The unthinking and irreligious part of mankind have taken occasion, from hence, with the *Deists*, to set themselves against revealed religion, or to give way to scepticism, as though there were nothing certain, or defensible, in religion, and take occasion to make it the subject of satyr and ridicule. But, passing this by, though it is a matter very much to be lamented, we will consider this doctrine as render'd less exceptionable, or more justly represented; and accordingly,

2. We may infer from it, that as it is agreeable to the divine perfections, so it has the greatest tendency to promote practical godliness. For,

(1.) Since God has fore-ordain'd whatever comes to pass; this should lead us to an humble submission to his will, in all the dispensations of his providence. When we consider that nothing, in this respect, comes by chance; this should have a tendency to quiet our minds, and silence all our murmuring and uneasy thoughts, whatever afflictions we are exposed to. We are too apt to complain sometimes of second causes, as though all our miseries took their rise from thence; and, at other times, to afflict our selves beyond measure, as apprehending that those proper means have not been used, which might have prevented them. So *Martha* tells our Saviour, *If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*¹; whereas we ought rather to consider, that all this befalls us in pursuance of God's purpose: had he designed to have prevented the affliction, he would have directed to other means conducive to that end, or would have attended those that have been used, with their desired success. We use the means, as not knowing what are the secret purposes of God, with respect to the event of things; but, when this is made known to us, it should teach us to acquiesce in, and be entirely resign'd to the divine will.

(2.) When we cannot see the reason, or understand the meaning of the dispensations of divine providence, and are not able to pass any judgment concerning future events, whether relating unto our

selves, or others; and, when all things look with a very dismal aspect, as to what concerns the interest and church of God in the world, we must be content to wait till he is pleased to discover them to us; what he oftentimes does, *we know not now, but shall know hereafter*, as our Saviour said to one of his disciples^k. 'Tis no wonder that we are at a loss, as to God's purposes, since secret things belong to him; and therefore all that we are to do, in such a case, is, to rest satisfied, that all these things shall, in the end, appear to have a tendency to advance his own perfections, and bring about the salvation of his people.

(3.) Since the purpose of God respects the means, as well as the end, this should put us upon the use of those proper means, in which we may hope to obtain grace and glory; and therefore this doctrine does not lead us to sloth, and indifference in religion; for that is to suppose, that the end and means are separated in God's purpose; and when, through his blessing attending them, the ordinances, or means of grace, are made effectual for the working of faith, and all other graces, these being connected, in God's purpose, with glory, it ought to encourage our hope relating to the end of faith, even the salvation of our souls.

(4.) Let us take heed that we do not peremptorily, without ground, conclude our selves elected unto eternal life, on the one hand, or rejected on the other. To determine that we are chosen to salvation, before we are effectually called, is presumptuously to enter into God's secret counsels, which we cannot, at present, have a certain and determinate knowledge of; but to lay this as a foundation, as to what concerns the conduct of our lives, is oftentimes of a very pernicious tendency. If, as the result of this conclusion made, we take encouragement to go on in sin, this will cut the sinews of all religion, and expose us to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, and a greater degree of impenitency and unbelief, as the consequence of this bold presumption and affront to the divine Majesty.

Neither, on the other hand, are we to conclude that we are not elected; for though we may be in suspense about the event of things, and not know whether we are elected or rejected, this is not inconsistent with our using endeavours to attain a good hope, through grace; yet to determine that we are not elected, is

¹ John xi. 21.

^k John xiii. 7.

268 GOD'S Decrees executed in the Work of Creation.

to conclude, against our selves, that all endeavours will be to no purpose, which we have no ground to do, since it is one thing to conclude that we are in a state of unregeneracy, and another thing to determine that we are not elected. The consequence of our concluding that we are in an unconverted state, ought to be our praying, waiting, and hoping for the efficacy of divine grace, which extends it self to the chief of sinners, as a relief against despair, though such can have no ground to say, that they are elected; therefore the safest way, and that which is most conducive to the ends of religion, is to be firmly perswaded, that though the final state of man be certainly determined by God, yet this is to be no rule for an unregenerate person to take his measures from, any more than if this were a matter of uncertainty, and, in all respects, undetermined by him.

(5.) Let us, according to the Apostle's advice, *Give diligence to make our calling and election sure*¹. It is certainly a very great privilege for us, not barely to know, that some were chosen to eternal life, but to be able to conclude that we are of that happy number; and, in order hereunto, we must not expect to have an extraordinary revelation thereof, or to find our selves described by name in scripture, as tho' this were the way to attain it; for the rule, by which we are to judge of this matter, is, our enquiring whether we have those marks, or evidences thereof, which are contain'd therein; and therefore we are, by a diligent and impartial self-examination, to endeavour to know whether we are called, or enabled, to perform the obedience of faith, which God is said to elect his people to, or whether we are holy, and without blame, before him in love; whether we have the temper and disposition of the children of God, as an evidence of our being chosen to the adoption of children, and, as such, are conformed to the image of Christ.

(6.) If we have ground to conclude that we are chosen to eternal life, this ought to be improved to the glory of God, and our own spiritual advantage; it ought to put us upon admiring and adoring the riches of discriminating grace, which is herein eminently illustrated, and such are under the highest obligation to walk humbly with God, as well as thankfully; for it is owing to his grace not only that they are chosen to eternal life, but that they are enabled to discern their interest in this privilege.

QUEST. XIV. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

ANSW. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

QUEST. XV. *What is the work of creation?*

ANSW. The work of creation is that, wherein God did, in the beginning, by the word of his power, make, of nothing, the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

HAVING consider'd God's eternal purpose, as respecting whatever shall come to pass, which is generally called an internal, or immanent act of the divine will, we are now to consider those works which are produced by him, in pursuance thereof. It is inconsistent with the *Idea* of an infinitely perfect Being to suppose, that any of his decrees shall not take effect, *Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good*^m? *His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure*ⁿ. This is a necessary consequence, from the immutability of his will, as well as from the end which he has designed to attain, to wit, the advancement of his own glory; and therefore, if he should not execute his decrees, he would lose that revenue of glory, which he design'd to bring to himself thereby, which it cannot be supposed that he would do; and accordingly we are to consider his power as exerted, in order to the accomplishment of his purpose; and this is said to have been done in the first production of all things, which is called, *The work of creation*, or in his upholding and governing all things, which is his *Providence*; both which are to be particularly consider'd. And,

I. We are to speak concerning the work of creation, and so to enquire what

¹ 2 Pet. i. 10.

^m Numb. xxiii. 19.

ⁿ Isai. xlv. 10.

In what Sense we are to understand the Word Creation. 269

we are to understand by *Creation*, and to consider it as a work peculiar to God.

II. That this work was not perform'd from eternity, but in the beginning of time.

III. How he is said to create all things by the word of his power.

IV. The end for which he made them, namely, for himself, or for his own glory.

V. The time in which he made them. And,

VI. The quality or condition thereof, as all things are said to have been made very good.

I. As to the meaning of the word *Creation*; it is the application thereof to the things made, or some circumstances attending this action, that determine the sense of it. The *Hebrew* and *Greek* words^o, by which it is express'd, are sometimes used to signify the natural production of things: Thus it is said, in *Psal.* cii. 18. *The people that shall be created, speaking of the generation to come, shall praise the Lord*; and elsewhere, in *Ezek.* xxi. 30. says God, *I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created*, that is, where thou wast born, in the land of thy nativity. And sometimes it is applied to signify the dispensations of providence, which, though they are the wonderful effects of divine power, yet they are taken in a sense different from the first production of all things: thus 'tis said, in *Isai.* xlv. 7. *I form the light, and create darkness*; which metaphorical expressions are explained in the following words, *I make peace and create evil*.

And, on the other hand, sometimes God's creating is express'd by his *making* all things; which word, in its common acceptation, is taken for the natural production of things; tho', in this instance, 'tis used for the production of things which are supernatural: thus 'tis said, in *John* i. 3. *All things were made by him*; and elsewhere, in *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*. Therefore it is by the application of these words, to the things produced, that we are more especially to judge of the sense thereof. Accordingly, when

God is said to create, or make the heavens and earth, or to bring things into being, which before did not exist, this is the most proper sense of the word *Creation*; and in this sense we take it, in this *Head* we are entering upon. It is the production of all things out of nothing, by his almighty word; and this is generally called immediate creation, which was the first display of divine power, a work with which time began; so we are to understand those words, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*^p, that is, that first matter out of which all things were formed, which has been neither increased nor diminished ever since, nor can be, whatever alterations there may be made in things, without supposing an act of the divine will to annihilate any part thereof, which we have no ground to do.

Again, it is sometimes taken for God's bringing things into that form, in which they are, which is generally called a mediate creation, as in the account we have thereof in the first *Chapter* of *Genesis*; in which God is said, out of that matter which he created at first, to create the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all living creatures that move therein, after their respective kinds, which no finite wisdom, or power, could have done; the work was supernatural, and so differs from the natural production of things by creatures, inasmuch as they can produce nothing, but out of other things, that have in themselves a tendency, according to the fix'd laws of nature, to be made, that which is designed to be produced out of them; as when a plant, or a tree, is produced out of a seed, or when the form, or shape of things is alter'd by the skill of men, where there is a tendency in the things themselves, in a natural way, to answer the end designed by them that made them, in which respect they are said to make, but not create those things; so that creation is a work peculiar to God, from which all creatures are excluded. Accordingly, it is a glory which God often appropriates to himself in scripture: thus he is called, by way of eminence, *The Creator of the ends of the earth*^q; and, he speaks concerning himself, with an unparallel'd magnificence of expression, *I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded*^r; and he is said to have done this, exclusively of all others: thus he

^o ברא, עשה, κτίσεν, ποιῶν, γίνεσθαι.

^p Gen. i. 1.

^q Isai. xl. 28.

^r Isai. xlv. 12.

270 *The World was not created from Eternity, nor could be.*

says, *I am the Lord, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by my self*¹. And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, since it is a work of infinite power, and therefore too great for any finite being, who can act no otherwise, but in proportion to the circumscribed limits of its own power, and being, at best, but a natural agent, it cannot produce any thing supernatural; from whence it may be infer'd, that no creature was an instrument made use of, by God, in the production of all things, or that infinite power could not be exerted by a finite medium: But this has been already consider'd, under a foregoing *Answer*².

II. We are now to consider, that this work of creation was not perform'd from eternity, but in the beginning of time. This we assert against some of the heathen philosophers, who have, in their writings, defended the eternity of the world³, being induced hereunto by those low conceptions, which they had of the power of God, as supposing, that because all creatures, or natural agents, must have some materials to work upon, so that as this proposition is true with respect to them, that nothing can be made out of nothing, they conclude, that it is also applicable to God. And this absurd opinion has been imbibed by some, who have pretended to the Christian name; it was maintain'd by *Hermogenes*, about the middle of the second *Century*, and, with a great deal of spirit and argument, oppos'd by *Tertullian*; and, among other things, that Father observes, that philosophy, in some respects, had pav'd the way to heresy⁴; and probably the Apostle *Paul* was apprehensive that it would do so; or that they, who were bred up in the schools of the philosophers, would, as it is plain they often did, adapt their notions in divinity, to those which they had before learned therein, of which this is a flagrant instance; and therefore he says, *Beware, lest any man spoil you thro' philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*⁵; and they, who have defended this notion, have

been divided in their sentiments about it. Some suppose, in general, that matter was eternal, but not brought into that form, in which it now is, till God, by his almighty power, produced that change in it, and so alter'd the form of things. Others suppose, that the world was in a form, not much unlike to what it now is, from eternity, and that there were eternal successive ages, and generations of men, and a constant alteration of things. Some parts of the world, at one time, destroy'd by deluges, or fire, or earthquakes, and other parts at another time; and so there was a kind of succession of generation and corruption; former worlds lost and buried in ruins, and all the monuments of their antiquity perished with them, and new ones arising in their stead. This they assert, as a blind to their ungrounded opinion, and as an answer to that reasonable demand, which might be made; If the world was eternal, how comes it to pass that we know nothing of what was done in it, in those ages, which went before that which we reckon the first beginning of time?

As for the school-men, though they have not any of them given directly into this notion, which is so notoriously contrary to scripture, yet some of them have very much confounded and puzzled the minds of men with their metaphysical subtilties about this matter, as some of them have pretended to maintain, that, though God did not actually create any thing before that beginning of time, which is mention'd in scripture, yet he might, had he pleased, have produced things from eternity⁶, because he had, from eternity, infinite power, and a sovereign will; therefore this power might have been deduced into act, and so there might have been an eternal production of things; for to suppose, that infinite power cannot exert it self, is contrary to the *Idea* of its being infinite. And to suppose that God was infinitely good, from eternity, implies, that he might have communicated being to creatures from eternity, in which his goodness would have exerted it self. And they farther argue, that it is certain, that God might have created the world sooner than he

¹ *Isai.* xlv. 24.

² See *Pag.* 172.

³ Of this opinion was *Aristotle*, and his followers; though he acknowledges, that it was contrary to the sentiments of all the philosophers that were before him. *Vid. Arist. de Caelo, Lib. I. cap. 2.* who, speaking concerning the creation of the world, says, *γενόμενον μὴ ἐν ἀπαρχῇ εἶναι φασίν.*

⁴ *Tertull. adv. Hermog. cap. 8. Hereticorum Patriarchæ Philosophi*; which was so memorable a passage, that it was quoted, upon the same occasion, by *Jerom*, and others of the Fathers.

⁵ *Coloss. ii. 8.*

⁶ This was maintained by *Aquinas*, *Durandus*, *Cajetan*, and others, though oppos'd by *Albertus Magnus*, *Bonaventure*, &c.

Arguments to prove that the World was not from Eternity. 271

did; so that, instead of its having continued in being, that number of years, which it has done, it might have existed any other unlimited number of years; or since, by an act of his will, it has existed so many thousand years, as it appears to have done, from scripture, it might, had he pleased, have existed any other number of years, though we suppose it never so large, and consequently that it might have existed from eternity. But what is this, but to darken truth, by words, without knowledge? or to measure the perfections of God, by the line or standard of finite things; it is to conceive of the eternity of God, as though it were successive. Therefore, though we do not deny but that God could have created the world any number of years, that a finite mind can describe, sooner than he did; yet this would not be to create it from eternity, since that exceeds all bounds. We do not deny but that the divine power might have been deduced into act, or created the world before he did, yet to say that he could create it from eternity, is contrary to the nature of things; for it is to suppose, that an infinite duration might be communicated to a finite Being, or that God might make a creature equal, in duration, with himself, which, as it contains the greatest absurdity, so the impossibility of the thing does not, in the least, argue any defect of power in him.

From whence we may infer, the vanity, and bold presumption, of measuring the power of God by the line of the creature, and the great advantage which we receive from divine revelation, which sets this matter in a clear light, by which it appears, that nothing existed before time but God; this is agreeable to the highest reason, and the divine perfections. To suppose, that a creature existed from eternity, implies a contradiction; for to be a creature, is to be produced by the power of a creator, who is God, and this is inconsistent with its existing from eternity; for that is to suppose that it had a being before it was brought into being.

Moreover, since to exist, from eternity, is to have an infinite, or unlimited duration, it will follow, from thence, that if the first matter, out of which all things were formed, was infinite in its duration, it must have all other per-

fections; particularly, it must be self-existent, and have in it nothing that is finite, for infinite and finite perfections are inconsistent with each other; and, if so, then it must not consist of any parts, or be divisible, as all material things are: Besides, if the world was eternal, it could not be measured by successive duration, inasmuch as there is no term, or point, from whence this succession may be computed, for that is inconsistent with eternity; and if its duration was once unmeasured, or not computed by succession, how came it afterwards to be successive, as the duration of all material Beings is?

Again, to suppose matter to be co-eternal with God, is to suppose it to be equal with him, for whatever has one divine perfection, must have all; so that this is contrary to those natural *Ideas*, which we have of the divine perfections, and contains such absurdities, as have not the least colour of reason to support them.

But it more evidently appears, from scripture, that the world was made in the beginning of time, and therefore did not exist from eternity; since therein we read, that *in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*^a; and elsewhere, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands*^b. Now, since we are not to confound time and eternity together, or to say, that that which was created in the beginning, was without beginning, that is, from eternity, it is evident, that no creature was eternal.

Thus having consider'd the impossibility of the existence of finite things, from eternity, we may here take occasion to vindicate the account we have in scripture, concerning the world's having been created between five and six thousand years since, from the objections of those who suppose, that the antiquity thereof exceeds the scripture-account by many ages. Those that follow the LXX translation of the Old Testament, in their chronological account of time, suppose the world to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years older than we have ground to conclude it is, according to the account we have thereof in the *Hebrew* text. This we cannot but think to be a mistake, and has led many of the Fathers into the same error^c, who, through

^a Gen. i. 1.

^b Heb. i. 10.

^c Thus *Augustin*, speaking concerning the years from the time of the creation to his time, reckons them to be not full, that is, almost six thousand years; whereas, in reality, it was but about four thousand four hundred, herein being imposed on by this translation. *Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei. Lib. XII. cap. 10.*

their

270 *The World was not created from Eternity, nor could be.*

says, *I am the Lord, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by my self*[†]. And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, since it is a work of infinite power, and therefore too great for any finite being, who can act no otherwise, but in proportion to the circumscribed limits of its own power, and being, at best, but a natural agent, it cannot produce any thing supernatural; from whence it may be infer'd, that no creature was an instrument made use of, by God, in the production of all things, or that infinite power could not be exerted by a finite medium: But this has been already consider'd, under a foregoing *Answer*[‡].

II. We are now to consider, that this work of creation was not perform'd from eternity, but in the beginning of time. This we assert against some of the heathen philosophers, who have, in their writings, defended the eternity of the world[§], being induced hereunto by those low conceptions, which they had of the power of God, as supposing, that because all creatures, or natural agents, must have some materials to work upon, so that as this proposition is true with respect to them, that nothing can be made out of nothing, they conclude, that it is also applicable to God. And this absurd opinion has been imbibed by some, who have pretended to the Christian name; it was maintain'd by *Hermogenes*, about the middle of the second Century, and, with a great deal of spirit and argument, oppos'd by *Tertullian*; and, among other things, that Father observes, that philosophy, in some respects, had pav'd the way to heresy^{*}; and probably the Apostle *Paul* was apprehensive that it would do so; or that they, who were bred up in the schools of the philosophers, would, as it is plain they often did, adapt their notions in divinity, to those which they had before learned therein, of which this is a flagrant instance; and therefore he says, *Beware, lest any man spoil you thro' philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*[†]; and they, who have defended this notion, have

been divided in their sentiments about it. Some suppose, in general, that matter was eternal, but not brought into that form, in which it now is, till God, by his almighty power, produced that change in it, and so alter'd the form of things. Others suppose, that the world was in a form, not much unlike to what it now is, from eternity, and that there were eternal successive ages, and generations of men, and a constant alteration of things. Some parts of the world, at one time, destroy'd by deluges, or fire, or earthquakes, and other parts at another time; and so there was a kind of succession of generation and corruption; former worlds lost and buried in ruins, and all the monuments of their antiquity perished with them, and new ones arising in their stead. This they assert, as a blind to their ungrounded opinion, and as an answer to that reasonable demand, which might be made; If the world was eternal, how comes it to pass that we know nothing of what was done in it, in those ages, which went before that which we reckon the first beginning of time?

As for the school-men, though they have not any of them given directly into this notion, which is so notoriously contrary to scripture, yet some of them have very much confounded and puzzled the minds of men with their metaphysical subtilties about this matter, as some of them have pretended to maintain, that, though God did not actually create any thing before that beginning of time, which is mention'd in scripture, yet he might, had he pleas'd, have produced things from eternity[‡], because he had, from eternity, infinite power, and a sovereign will; therefore this power might have been deduced into act, and so there might have been an eternal production of things; for to suppose, that infinite power cannot exert it self, is contrary to the *Idea* of its being infinite. And to suppose that God was infinitely good, from eternity, implies, that he might have communicated being to creatures from eternity, in which his goodness would have exerted it self. And they farther argue, that it is certain, that God might have created the world sooner than he

[†] Isai. xlv. 24.

[‡] See Pag. 172.

[§] Of this opinion was *Aristotle*, and his followers; though he acknowledges, that it was contrary to the sentiments of all the philosophers that were before him. *Vid. Arist. de Calo, Lib. I. cap. 2.* who, speaking concerning the creation of the world, says, γενόμενον μὴ ἐν ἀπαρχῇ εἶναι φασίν.

^{*} *Tertull. adv. Hermog. cap. 8. Hæreticorum Patriarchæ Philosophi*; which was so memorable a passage, that it was quoted, upon the same occasion, by *Jerom*, and others of the Fathers.

[†] *Coloss. ii. 8.*

[‡] This was maintained by *Aquinas*, *Durandus*, *Cajetan*, and others, though oppos'd by *Albertus Magnus*, *Bonaventure*, &c.

did; so that, instead of its having continued in being, that number of years, which it has done, it might have existed any other unlimited number of years; or since, by an act of his will, it has existed so many thousand years, as it appears to have done, from scripture, it might, had he pleased, have existed any other number of years, though we suppose it never so large, and consequently that it might have existed from eternity. But what is this, but to darken truth, by words, without knowledge? or to measure the perfections of God, by the line or standard of finite things; it is to conceive of the eternity of God, as though it were successive. Therefore, though we do not deny but that God could have created the world any number of years, that a finite mind can describe, sooner than he did; yet this would not be to create it from eternity, since that exceeds all bounds. We do not deny but that the divine power might have been deduced into act, or created the world before he did, yet to say that he could create it from eternity, is contrary to the nature of things; for it is to suppose, that an infinite duration might be communicated to a finite Being, or that God might make a creature equal, in duration, with himself, which, as it contains the greatest absurdity, so the impossibility of the thing does not, in the least, argue any defect of power in him.

From whence we may infer, the vanity, and bold presumption, of measuring the power of God by the line of the creature, and the great advantage which we receive from divine revelation, which sets this matter in a clear light, by which it appears, that nothing existed before time but God; this is agreeable to the highest reason, and the divine perfections. To suppose, that a creature existed from eternity, implies a contradiction; for to be a creature, is to be produced by the power of a creator, who is God, and this is inconsistent with its existing from eternity; for that is to suppose that it had a being before it was brought into being.

Moreover, since to exist, from eternity, is to have an infinite, or unlimited duration, it will follow, from thence, that if the first matter, out of which all things were formed, was infinite in its duration, it must have all other per-

fections; particularly, it must be self-existent, and have in it nothing that is finite, for infinite and finite perfections are inconsistent with each other; and, if so, then it must not consist of any parts, or be divisible, as all material things are: Besides, if the world was eternal, it could not be measured by successive duration, inasmuch as there is no term, or point, from whence this succession may be computed, for that is inconsistent with eternity; and if its duration was once unmeasured, or not computed by succession, how came it afterwards to be successive, as the duration of all material Beings is?

Again, to suppose matter to be co-eternal with God, is to suppose it to be equal with him, for whatever has one divine perfection, must have all; so that this is contrary to those natural *Ideas*, which we have of the divine perfections, and contains such absurdities, as have not the least colour of reason to support them.

But it more evidently appears, from scripture, that the world was made in the beginning of time, and therefore did not exist from eternity; since therein we read, that *in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*^a; and elsewhere, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands*^b. Now, since we are not to confound time and eternity together, or to say, that that which was created in the beginning, was without beginning, that is, from eternity, it is evident, that no creature was eternal.

Thus having consider'd the impossibility of the existence of finite things, from eternity, we may here take occasion to vindicate the account we have in scripture, concerning the world's having been created between five and six thousand years since, from the objections of those who suppose, that the antiquity thereof exceeds the scripture-account by many ages. Those that follow the LXX translation of the Old Testament, in their chronological account of time, suppose the world to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years older than we have ground to conclude it is, according to the account we have thereof in the *Hebrew* text. This we cannot but think to be a mistake, and has led many of the Fathers into the same error^c; who, through

^a Gen. i. 1.

^b Heb. i. 10.

^c Thus *Augustin*, speaking concerning the years from the time of the creation to his time, reckons them to be not full, that is, almost six thousand years; whereas, in reality, it was but about four thousand four hundred, herein being imposed on by this translation. *Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei. Lib. XII. cap. 10.*

their unacquaintedness with the *Hebrew* language, excepting *Jerom* and *Origen*, hardly used any but this translation ^d.

But this we shall pass over, and proceed to consider the account that some give of the antiquity of the world, which is a great deal more remote, from what we have in scripture, though this is principally to be found in the writings of those who were altogether unacquainted with it. Thus the *Egyptians*, according to the report of some ancient historians, pretended, that they had chronicles of the reigns of their kings for many thousand years longer than we have ground to conclude the world has stood ^e. And the *Chaldeans* exceed them in the accounts they give of some things contain'd in their history; and the *Chineses* pretend to exceed them by many thousand years, but these accounts are fabulous and ungrounded ^f. And inasmuch as they are confuted, and exposed, by many of the heathen themselves, as ridiculous and absurd boasts, rather than authentick accounts, no one, who has the least degree of modesty, can oppose them, to the account we have, in scripture, of the time that the world has continued, which is no more than between five or six thousand years.

And, that the world cannot be of greater antiquity than this, may be proved, from the account which we have of the first original of nations, and the inventors of things in scripture, and other writings. It is not reasonable to suppose, that men lived in the world many thousand years, without the knowledge of those things, that were necessary for the improvement of their minds, and others that were conducive to the good of human society, as well as subservient to the

conveniencies of life; but this they must have done, who are supposed to have lived before these things were known in the world.

As to what concerns the original of nations, which spread themselves over the earth after the universal deluge, we have an account of it in *Gen. x.* and, in particular, of the first rise of the *Assyrian* monarchy, which was erected by *Nimrod*, who is supposed to be the same that other writers call *Belus*. This monarchy was continued, either under the name of the *Assyrian*, or *Babylonian*, till *Cyrus's* time, and no writers pretend that there was any before it; and, according to the scripture-account hereof, it was erected above seventeen hundred years after the creation of the world; whereas, if the world had been so old, as some pretend it is, or had exceeded the scripture-account of the age and duration thereof, we should certainly have had some relation of the civil affairs of kingdoms, and nations, in those foregoing ages, to be depended on, but of this, history is altogether silent; for we suppose the account that the *Egyptians* give of their *Dynasties*, and the reigns of their gods and kings, in those foregoing ages, are, as was before observed, ungrounded and fabulous.

As to what respects the inventors of things, which are necessary in human life, we have some hints of this in scripture. As we have an account, in scripture ^g, of the first that made any considerable improvement in the art of husbandry, and in the management of cattle, and of the first instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, by which means those tools were framed, which are necessary

^d Every one, that observes the LXX translation in their chronological account of the lives of the patriarchs, from *Adam* to *Abraham*, in *Gen. Chap. v.* compared with *Chap. xi.* will find, that there are so many years added therein to the account of the lives of several there mentioned, as will make the sum total, from the creation of the world to the call of *Abraham*, to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years more than the account which we have thereof in the *Hebrew* text; which I rather choose to call a mistake, in that translation, than to attempt to defend it; though some, who have paid too great a deference to it, have thought that the *Hebrew* text was corrupted, after our Saviour's time, by the *Jews*, by leaving out those years which the LXX. have added, designing hereby to make the world believe, that the Messiah was not to come so soon as he did, by fourteen or fifteen hundred years; and that therefore the *Hebrew* text, in those places, is to be corrected by that Version, which I cannot but conclude to be a very injurious insinuation, as well as not supported by any argument that has the least probability in it.

^e *Vid. Pomp. Mel. Lib. I. cap. 9.* who speaks of the annals of the kings of *Egypt*, as containing above thirteen thousand years; and others extend the antiquity of that nation many thousand years more. *Vid. Diod. Sicul. Biblioth. Lib. I.*

^f *Vid. Cicero de Divinat. Lib. I.* who condemns the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians*, as foolish, vain, yea impudent, in their accounts relating to this matter, when they speak, as some of them do, of things done four hundred and seventy thousand years before; upon which occasion, *Lactantius*, in *Lib. 7. § 14. de Vita beatâ*, passes this just censure upon them, *Quia se posse argui non putabant liberum sibi crediderunt esse, mentiri*; and *Macrobius in somn. Scip. cap. 11.* supposes that they did not measure their years as we do, by the annual revolution of the sun, but by the moon; and so a year, according to them, was no more than a month, which he supposes *Virgil* was apprised of, when he calls the common solar year *Annus Magnus*, as compared with those short ones that were measured by the monthly revolution of the moon: But this will not bring the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* accounts to a just number of years, but some of them would, notwithstanding, exceed the time that the world has stood. As for the *Chineses*, they have no authentick histories that give any account of this matter; but all depends upon uncertain tradition, transmitted to them by those who are their leaders in religious matters, and reported by travellers, who have received these accounts from them, which, therefore, are far from deserving any credit in the world.

^g *Gen. iv. 20—22.*

The Invention of Things proves the World not Eternal. 273

for the making those things that are useful in life; and also of the first inventor of musick, who is called, *The father of all such as handle the harp and organ*, which was in that space of time, which intervened between the creation and the deluge; and, after this, we read of the first plantation of vineyards, and the farther improvement thereof by making wine, by *Noah*^h, which the world seems to have known nothing of before. And it is more than probable, that the art of navigation was not known till *Noah*, by divine direction, framed the ark, which gave the first hint to this useful invention, and this art was not, for many ages, so much improved, as it is in our day. The mariner's needle; and the variation of the compass; or the method of sailing by observation of the heavenly bodies, seem to have been altogether unknown by those mariners, in whose ship the Apostle *Paul* failedⁱ; for want of which, they exposed themselves to suffer shipwreck, hoping, thereby, to save their lives.

And, as to what concerns those inventions, that are necessary for the improvement of knowledge; it does not appear that writing was known till *Moses's* time, and, after this, the use of letters was brought into *Greece* by *Cadmus*. And therefore 'tis no wonder, when historians give some dark hints of things done before this, being unacquainted with scripture-history, that they are at a loss, and pretend not to give an account of things done before the deluge^k. Shall we suppose, that there were so many ages, as some pretend, in which men liv'd, and yet no account given of things done therein, transmitted to posterity, by those who assert it? Therefore there can be no ground to conclude, that the world has stood longer than the scripture-account thereof^l. We pass by the invention of the art of printing, which has not been known in the world above three hundred years; and the many improvements that

have been made in philosophy, mathematics, medicine, anatomy, chymistry, and mechanicks, in the last age; and can we suppose, that there are so many thousand ages pass'd without any of these improvements? And to this we may add, that the origin of idolatry, in them who worshipped men, whom they called gods, namely, such as had been useful while they lived among those that worshipped them, or had been of great note, or power, in the world, or who were the first inventors of things. This being known, and the time in which they liv'd, mention'd, by some writers among the heathen, which is much later than the first age of the world, is a farther evidence of this truth, that it has not stood so many years, as some pretend.

If it be objected, that there has been a kind of circulation, or revolution of things, with respect to mens knowing, and afterwards losing, and then regaining the knowledge of some of those arts, which we suppose to have been first discover'd in later ages, so that they might have been known in the world many ages before.

This is to assert, without pretending to give any proof thereof; and nothing can be infer'd from a mere possibility of things, which no one, who has the least degree of judgment, will ever acquiesce in; especially the memory of some things could never have been universally eras'd out of the minds of men, by any devastations that might be supposed to have been made in the world. Therefore, to conclude this argument, nothing can be reasonably objected against the account we have, in scripture, of the creation of the world at first, and of its having continued that number of years, and no longer, which we believe it to have done, from those sacred writings, which contain the only authentic records thereof, and have sufficient authority to put to silence all those fabulous conjectures, or vain and groundless boasts, that pretend to contradict it.

^h Gen. ix. 20, 21.

ⁱ Acts xxvii.

^k The common distribution of time, into that which is *ἄσπλον*, before the flood, and *μύθικον*, after it, till they computed by the *Olympiads*; and afterwards that which they call *ἰστορικόν*, the only account to be depended upon, makes this matter farther evident.

^l See this argument farther improv'd, by those who have insisted on the first inventors of things; as *Polydor. Virgil. de Rerum inventoribus*; and *Plin. Secund. Hist. Mundi, Lib. VII. cap. 56—60.* and *Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. I. Lucretius*, though an assertor of the eternity of matter and motion, from his master *Epicurus*, yet proves, that the world, as to its present form, had a beginning; and what he says is so much to our present argument, that I cannot but mention it. *Vid. Lucret. de Rer. Nat. Lib. V.*

Præterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo
Terrarum & Cœli, sempérq; æterna fuere;
Cur suprà bellum Thebanum, & funera Trojæ,
Non alias alii quoque res cecinêra Poetæ?
Quo tot facta virum toties cecidêre? neque usquam
Æternis famæ monumentis insita florent?
Verùm, ut opinor, habet novitatem Summa, recensq;

Natura est Mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit.
Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliuntur:
Nunc etiam augescunt: nunc addita navigiis sunt
Multæ: modo organici melicos peperêre sonores.
Denique Natura hæc rerum, ratioque reperta est
Nuper; —————

III. God is said to have created all things by the word of his power: thus the Psalmist says, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*¹. Some, indeed, understand this, and several other scriptures, in which God is said to create all things by his word, as implying, that God the Father made all things by the Son, his personal Word: But, though this be a great truth, and it be expressly said, *All things were made by him*^m, as has been consider'd under a foregoing *Answer*ⁿ, whereby the divinity of Christ was proved; yet here we speak of creation, as 'tis an effect of that power, which is a perfection of the divine nature. And whereas it is called the word of his power, it signifies, that God produced all things by an act of his power and sovereign will; so that how difficult soever the work was in it self, as infinitely superior to finite power, yet it argues, that it was perform'd by God without any manner of difficulty, and therefore it was as easy to him, as a thought, or an act of willing is to any creature; accordingly 'tis said, *He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*^o. As nothing could resist his will, or hinder his purpose from taking effect, so all things were equally possible to him. In this respect, creation differs from the natural production of things, which, though they be the effects of power, yet nothing is produced by a powerful word, or, as it were, commanded into being, but that which is the effect of almighty power, as the creation of all things is said to be.

IV. The end for which God made all things, was his own glory; or, as 'tis said, *He made all things for himself*^p, that is, that he might demonstrate his eternal power and Godhead, and all those divine perfections, which shine forth in this illustrious work, and so might receive a revenue of glory, as the result thereof. Not that he was under any natural necessity to do this, or would have been less happy and glorious in himself, than he was from all eternity, if he had not given being to any thing; we are far from supposing, that there is any addition made hereby to his essential glory; this appears from the independence of his divine perfections: As they are not derived from the creature, so they cannot re-

ceive any additional improvement from him, no more than the lustre of the sun is increased by its being beheld by our eyes; nor does it sustain any real diminution thereof, when its brightness is obscured by the interposure of any thing that hides it from us. God did not make the world that his power or wisdom might be improved hereby; but that he might be admired and adored, or that his relative glory might be advanced by us, which would be the highest advantage to us. This was the great end for which he made all things; and 'tis very agreeable to the scope and design of scripture in general, which puts us upon giving him the glory due to his name, as being induced hereunto by all the displays thereof in his works.

Therefore 'tis a very unbecoming way of speaking, and tends very much to detract from the divine perfections, to say as a judicious writer^q represents some objecting, "As though God were not so selfish, and desirous of glory, as to make the world, and all creatures therein, only for his own honour, and to be praised by men." And another writer^r speaks his own sense of this matter, in words no less shocking: He says, indeed, "That God cannot really suffer any diminution of his own by our dislike, or is advanced in honour by our approbation of his dispensations;" which, as it respects his essential glory, is an undoubted truth; but yet he speaks, in other respects, of the glory of God, by which, 'tis plain, he means that which is generally called his relative, or manifestative glory, in a very unbecoming manner, when he says; "That God, being infinitely perfect, must be infinitely happy within himself, and so can design no self-end without himself; therefore what other end can he be supposed to aim at in these things, but our good? 'Tis therefore a vain imagination, that the great design of any of God's actions, his glorious works and dispensations, should be thus to be admired, or applauded, by his worthless creatures, that he may gain esteem, or a good word, from such vile creatures as we are. We take too much upon us, if we imagine that the all-wise God can be concerned, whether such blind creatures, as we are, approve or disapprove of his proceedings; and we think too meanly of, and detract

¹ Psal. xxxiii. 6.^m John i. 3.ⁿ See Pag. 170, 171.^o Psal. xxxiii. 9.^p Prov. xvi. 4.^q See Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation, Pag. 182.^r Whitby on Election, Pag. 92, 93.

" from

“ from his great Majesty, if we conceive
 “ he can be delighted with our applause,
 “ or aim at reputation from us in his
 “ glorious design, that therefore such as
 “ we should think well of him, or have
 “ due apprehensions of those attributes,
 “ by the acknowledgment of which we
 “ are said to glorify him.” This is, at
 once, to divest him of all that glory,
 which he design’d from his works; but
 far be it from us to approve of any such
 modes of speaking. Therefore we must
 conclude, that though God did not make
 any thing with a design to render himself
 more glorious than he was, from all eter-
 nity, yet it was, that his creatures should
 behold and improve the displays of his
 divine perfections, and so render himself
 the object of desire and delight, that reli-
 gious worship might be excited hereby,
 and that we might ascribe to him the
 glory that is due to his name.

We might also observe, that God crea-
 ted all things by his power, that he might
 take occasion to set forth the glory of all
 his other perfections, in his works of pro-
 vidence and grace, and particularly in the
 work of our redemption, all which suppose
 the creature brought into being; and so
 his first work made way for all others, which
 are, or shall be performed by him in time,
 or throughout the ages of eternity.

V. We are now to consider the space
 of time, in which God created all things,
 namely, in six days. This could not
 have been determined by the light of na-
 ture, and therefore must be concluded to
 be a doctrine of pure revelation; as also
 the account we have, in *Gen. i.* of the
 order in which things were brought to
 perfection, or the work of each day.
 Here we cannot but take notice of the
 opinion of some, who suppose, that the
 world was created in an instant, as think-
 ing, that this is more agreeable to the
Idea of creation, and more plainly dis-
 tinguishes it from the natural production
 of things, which are brought to perfe-
 ction by degrees, and not in a moment,
 as they suppose this work was. This
 opinion has been advanced by some an-
 cient writers; and whereas it seems di-
 rectly to contradict that account which is
 given thereof by *Moses*, they suppose that
 the distribution of the work of creation,
 into that of six days, is only designed to
 lead us into the knowledge of the distinct
 parts thereof, whereby they may be bet-
 ter conceived of, as though they had been

made in such an order, one after another;
 but this is to make the scripture speak
 what men please to have it, without any
 regard had to the genuine sense and im-
 port of the words thereof. Had it only
 been asserted, that the first matter, out
 of which all things were formed, had
 been created in an instant; that is not
 only agreeable to the work of creation,
 but to the literal sense of the text; for it
 is said to be created *in the beginning*,
 that is, in the first point of time; or if
 it had only been said, that God could
 have brought all things to perfection in
 an instant, we would not have denied it;
 but to assert that he did so, we cannot
 but think an ill-grounded sense of a plain
 part of scripture: That which induces
 them to give into this opinion is, because
 they think that this redounds to the glory
 of God, and seems most agreeable to a
 supernatural production of things, and to
 those expressions, by which the work of
 creation is represented; as in the scripture
 before-mention’d, in which it is said,
God spake, and it was done; that which
 was produced by a word’s speaking, is
 perform’d in an instant. And they sup-
 pose, that this is agreeable to the account
 which we have of that change which shall
 pass on the bodies of those who shall be
 found alive at the last day, that it shall
 be *in a moment, in the twinkling of an
 eye*[†]; and to some other miracles and su-
 pernatural productions, which have been
 instantaneous. But all this is not suffi-
 cient to support an opinion, which cannot
 be defended any otherwise, than by sup-
 posing that the express words of scripture
 must be understood in an allegorical
 sense.

There is therefore another account given
 of this matter, by some divines, of very
 considerable worth and judgment[†], which,
 as they apprehend, contains a concession
 of as much as need be demanded in fa-
 vour of the instantaneous production of
 things, as most agreeable to the *Idea* of
 creation, and yet does not militate against
 the sense of the account given thereof,
 in *Gen. i.* and that is, that the distinct
 parts of the creation were each of them
 produced in a moment: As for instance,
 in the work of the first day, there was the
 first matter of all things produced in one
 moment; and, after that, in the same
 day, light was produced, in another mo-
 ment, agreeably to those words, *Let there
 be light, and there was light*; and, in ano-
 ther moment, there was a division of the

[†] 1 Cor. xv. 52.

[†] See Turret. Theol. Elenct. Tom. I. Loc. 5. Quest. 5.

276 *Concerning the instantaneous Production of Things.*

light from the darkness, and so the work of the first day was finished. And, in the other days, where the works were various, there were distinct acts of the divine will, or words of command given concerning their production, which immediately ensued hereupon; and there was, in several instances, an interval between the production of one thing and another, which belong'd to the same day's work; particularly, in the sixth day, there was first a word of command given, by which beasts and creeping things were formed, and then another word given forth, by which man was created, when, indeed, there was an approbation of the former part of this day's work, in *Ver. 26*. God says, *That it was good*, before the general approbation express'd in *Ver. 31*. in the end of the day, was given, when God *saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*.

There is nothing, in this opinion, (the main reason and foundation whereof has been before observed) that can be much disliked, neither is it very material whether it be defended or oppos'd; and therefore, I think, they speak with the greatest prudence, as well as temper, who reckon this among the number of those questions, which are generally called problematical, that is, such as may be either affirm'd or deny'd, without any great danger of departing from the faith^u; and, indeed, I cannot see that the reasons assigned, which induce persons to adhere to either side of the question, with so much warmth, as to be impatient of contradiction, are sufficiently conclusive.

The main objection brought against their opinion, who plead for an instantaneous production of things in each day, is, that for God to bring the work of each day to perfection in a moment, and, after that, not to begin the work of the next day, till the respective day began, infers God's resting each day from his work; whereas, he is not said to rest till the whole creation was brought to perfection. But I cannot see this to be a just consequence, or sufficient to overthrow this opinion; since God's resting from his work, when the whole was finished, principally intends his not producing any new species of creatures, and not barely his ceasing to produce what he had made; for such a rest as this might as well be applied to his finishing the work of each day, though he took up the whole space

of a day therein, as if he had finished it in a moment.

And, on the other hand, when it is objected against the common opinion relating to God's bringing the work of each day to perfection by degrees, so as to take up the space of a day in doing it, that it is not agreeable to the *Idea* of creation. This is no just way of reasoning, nor sufficient to overthrow it; since we generally conclude, that God's upholding providence, which some call, as it were, a continued creation, is no less an instance of divine and supernatural power, than his producing them at first: But this is not perform'd in an instant; nevertheless, it is said to be done, as the Apostle speaks, in *Heb. i. 3*. *By the word of his power*. Besides, there are some parts of the creation, which, from the nature of the thing, could hardly be produced in an instant, particularly those works which were perform'd by motion, which cannot be instantaneous; as the dividing the light from the darkness, the gathering the waters together into one place, so that the dry land should appear; and, if this took up more than a moment, why may it not be supposed to take up the space of a day? So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that though it is certain that spirits, such as angels, or the souls of our first parents, could not be otherwise created, than in an instant, inasmuch as they are immaterial, and so do not consist of parts successively form'd; yet none ought to determine, with too great peremptoriness, that other works, performed in the six days, must each of them be performed in an instant, or else the work could not properly be called a creation; and therefore the commonly received opinion seems as probable as any other, that has hitherto been advanced, as it is equally, if not more agreeable, to the express words of scripture.

Here we shall give a brief account of the work of the six days, as it is contained in the first *Chapter* of *Genesis*, in the *First day*, the first matter out of which all things were produced, was created out of nothing, which is described as being *without form*, that is, not in that form which God designed to bring it into; whereas, in other respects, matter cannot be without all manner of form, or those dimensions that are essential to it, and, as it was created without form, so without motion; so that as God is the Creator of

^u Vid. *Wisi* in *Symbol. Exercit. 8. § 66.*

all things, he is the first Mover. Nevertheless, I am far from thinking, that all God did, in the creation of things, was by putting every thing in motion, and that this brought all the parts of the creation into their respective form. As an artificer may be said to frame a machine, which, by its motion, will produce other things, which he designed to make by the help thereof, without giving himself any farther trouble, so they suppose that, by those laws of motion, which God impress'd upon matter at first, one part of the creation brought another into the various forms, which they attained afterwards*. And the first thing that was produced, which was a farther part of the six days work, was light; concerning this, many have advanced their own ill-grounded conjectures. There are some writers, among the Papists, who have supposed that it was a quality, without a subject^y, which is an obscure and indefensible way of speaking. Others have thought, that hereby we are to understand the angels; but this is to strain the sense of words too far, by having recourse to a metaphor, which is inconsistent with what immediately follows, that God divided the light from the darkness. But it seems most probable that nothing else is intended hereby, but those lucid bodies, which, on the fourth day, were collected into the sun and fixed stars.

To this let me add, that it is more than probable that God, on the first day, created the highest heaven, which is sometimes called his throne, together with the angels, the glorious inhabitants thereof. 'Tis true, *Moses*, in his history of the creation, is silent as to this matter, unless it may be infer'd from those words, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*; though, as has been before observed, something else seems princi-

pally to be intended thereby: nevertheless, we have sufficient ground to conclude, that they were created in the beginning of time, and consequently in the first day, from what is said elsewhere, that *when God laid the foundation of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*^z; where the angels are represented as celebrating and adoring those divine perfections, which were glorified in the beginning of the work of creation; therefore they were, at that time, brought into being.

On the second day, God divided that part of the world, which is above, from that which is below, by an extended space, which is stiled the firmament, and otherwise called heaven, though distinguished from the highest heaven, or the heaven of heavens; and it is farther observ'd, that hereby the waters that are above, are separated from those which are below, that is, the clouds from the sea, and other waters, that are in the bowels of the earth.

As for that conjecture of some, taken from hence, and especially from what the Psalmist says, *Praise him, ye waters, that are above the heavens*^a, that there is a vast collection of super-celestial waters, which have no communication with those that are contained in the clouds; this seems to be an ungrounded opinion, not well agreeing with those principles of natural philosophy, which are received in this present age, though maintain'd by some of the ancient Fathers, as principally founded on the sense in which they understand this text; neither do they give a tolerable account of the design of providence in collecting and fixing them there^b. Therefore nothing seems to be intended, in that text, but the waters that are contain'd in the clouds, as it is said, *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds*^c; and, indeed, the *Hebrew* words seem not

* This is the main thing that is advanced by *Des Cartes*, in his philosophy, which formerly obtained more in the world than it does at present; though there are several divines, in the *Netherlands*, who still adhere to, and defend that hypothesis. This was thought a sufficient expedient to fence against the absurdities of *Epicurus*, and his followers, who suppose, that things attained their respective forms by the fortuitous concurrence of atoms; nevertheless, it is derogatory to the Creator's glory, inasmuch as it sets aside his immediate efficiency in the production of things.

^y This absurd opinion the Papists are very fond of, inasmuch as it serves their purpose in defending the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

^z Job xxxviii. 4, 7.

^a Psal. cxlviii. 4.

^b *Ambrose*, in his *Hexameron*, Lib. II. cap. 3. as well as *Basil*, and others, suppose, that the use thereof is to qualify the extraordinary heat of the sun, and other celestial bodies, to prevent their burning the frame of nature, and especially their destroying this lower world; and others think, that they are reserved in store, to answer some particular ends of providence, when God, at any time, designs to destroy the world by a deluge; and consequently they conclude, that it was by a supply of water from thence, that there was a sufficient quantity pour'd down, when the world was drowned, in the universal deluge: But, though a late ingenious writer, [*Vid. Burnet. Tellur. Theor. Lib. I. cap. 2.*] supposes, that the clouds could afford but a small part of that water, which was sufficient to answer that end, which he supposes to be eight times as much as the sea contains; yet he does not think fit to fetch a supply thereof from the super-celestial stores, not only as supposing the opinion to be ill-grounded, but by being at a loss to determine how these waters should be disposed of again, which could not be accounted for any other way but by annihilation, since they could not be exhal'd by the sun, or contained in clouds, by reason of their distant situation, as being far above them.

^c Job xxvi. 8.

278 *The distinct Work of each of the six Days.*

to be justly translated^d; for they ought to be render'd, *Ye waters that are from above in the firmament*, not above the heavens, but the earth, or a considerable distance from it, in the firmament, as the clouds are.

On the third day, the sea and rivers were divided from the earth, and the dry land appear'd, and the earth brought forth herbs, grass, trees, and plants, with which it is so richly stored, which, in a natural way, it has produced ever since.

On the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars, were made, to enlighten, and, by their influence, as it were, to enliven the world, and so render it a beautiful place, which would otherwise have been a dismal and uncomfortable dungeon, and that hereby the four seasons of the year might be continued in their respective courses, and their due measures set to them: thus 'tis said, these heavenly bodies were appointed *for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years*^e.

This has occasion'd some to enquire, whether any countenance is hereby given to judicial astrology, or whether the heavenly bodies have any influence on the conduct of human life, which some ancient and modern writers have defended, not without advancing many absurdities, derogatory to the glory of providence, as well as contrary to the nature of second causes, and their respective effects; and, when the moral actions of intelligent creatures are said to be pointed at, or directed by the stars, this is contrary to the laws of human nature, or the nature of man, as a free agent; therefore, whatever be the sense of these words of scripture, 'tis certain, they give no countenance to this presumptuous and ungrounded practice. But this we shall take occasion to oppose, under a following *Answer*, when we consider judicial astrology, as forbidden in the *first Commandment*^f. Therefore all that we shall add, at present, is, that when the heavenly bodies are said to be appointed *for times and seasons*, &c. nothing is intended thereby, but that they distinguish the times and seasons of the year; or, it may be, in a natural way, have some present and immediate influence on the bodies of men, and some other creatures below them.

There is also another question, which generally occurs when persons treat of

this subject, namely, whether there are not distinct worlds of men, or other creatures, who inhabit some of those celestial bodies, which, by late observations, are supposed to be fitted to receive them. This has been maintain'd by *Keplar*, *Bishop Wilkins*, and other ingenious writers; and that which has principally led them to assert it, is, because some of them are, as is almost universally allow'd, not only bigger than this earth, but they seem to consist of matter, not much unlike to it, and therefore are no less fit to entertain distinct worlds of intelligent creatures. And they farther add, in defence of this argument, that it cannot reasonably be supposed that there should be such a vast collection of matter, created with no other design, but to add to the small degree of light, which the planets (the moon excepted) afford to this lower world. As for any other advantage that they are of to it, any farther than as they are objects, to set forth the wisdom and power of God, this cannot be determined by us; therefore they conclude, that they were form'd for the end above-mention'd. And some carry their conjectures beyond this, and suppose, that as every one of the fix'd stars are bodies, which shine as the sun does, with their own unborrowed light, and are vastly larger, that therefore there is some other use designed thereby, besides that which this world receives from them, namely, to give light to some worlds of creatures, that are altogether unknown to us. According to this supposition, there are not only more worlds than ours, but multitudes of them, in proportion to the number of the stars, which are inhabited either by men, or some other species of intelligent creatures, which tends exceedingly, in their opinion, to advance the power, wisdom, and goodness, of the great Creator.

The only thing that I shall say, concerning this modern hypothesis, is, that as, on the one hand, the common method of opposition to it, is not, in all respects, sufficient to overthrow the argument in general, especially when men pretend not to determine what kinds of intelligent creatures inhabit these worlds, and when they are not too peremptory in their assertions about this matter; so, on the other hand, when this argument is defended with that warmth, as though it were a necessary and important article of

^d It is not על רקיע, but מעל לרקיע.

^e Gen. i. 14.

^f See Vol. II. Quest. CV.

faith, and not only assert the possibility, or, at least, the probability of the truth thereof, but speak with as much assurance of it, as though it were founded in scripture; and when they conclude that they are inhabited by men, and pretend to describe, not only the form of some of these worlds, but give such an account of the inhabitants thereof, as though they had learn'd it from one who came down from thence^e; in this respect, they expose the argument, which they pretend to defend, to contempt, and render it justly exceptionable. But, if men do not exceed those due bounds of modesty, which should always attend such disquisitions, and distinguish things that are only probable, from those that are demonstratively certain, and reckon this no other than an ingenious speculation, which may be affirm'd, or deny'd, in common with some other astronomical, or philosophical problems, without considering it, as affecting any article of natural or reveal'd religion, I would not oppose the argument in general, how much soever I would do the particular explication thereof, as above-mention'd: But, when this is brought in, as a matter of debate, in theologick schools, and disputed with as much warmth, as though it were next to an heresy to deny it, I cannot but express as much dislike thereof, as any have done, who give into the commonly receiv'd opinion relating to this matter.

On the fifth day, another sort of creatures, endowed with sense, as well as life and motion, were produced, partly out of the waters, and partly out of the earth, that was mix'd with them, namely, the fish that were designed to live in the waters, and the winged fowl, which were to fly above them^b.

On the sixth day, all sorts of beasts, and creeping things, with which the earth is plentifully furnished, were produced out of it. And whereas there are two words used to set forth the different species of living creatures, as contra-distinguished from creeping things, namely,

the cattle and the beasts of the earth, it is generally supposed to imply the different sorts of beasts, such as are tame or wild, though wild beasts were not, at first, so injurious to mankind, as now they are.

In the latter part of the day, when this lower world was brought to perfection, and furnished with every thing necessary for his entertainment, man, for whose sake it was made, was created out of the dust of the ground; which will be more particularly consider'd in a following *Answer*ⁱ.

God having thus produced all things in this order and method, as we have an account thereof in scripture, he fixed, or established the course or laws of nature, whereby the various species of living creatures might be propagated, throughout all succeeding ages, without the interposure of his supernatural power, in a continued creation of them; and, after this, he rested from his work, when he had brought all things to perfection.

Thus having consider'd the creation, as a work of six days, it may farther be enquired; whether it can be determined, with any degree of probability, in what time, or season^k of the year all things were created. Some are of opinion, that it was in the spring, because, at that time, the face of the earth is renewed every year, and all things begin to grow and flourish^l. And some of the Fathers have assigned this, as a reason of it; because the Son of God, the second *Adam*, suffer'd, and rose from the dead, whereby the world was, as it were, renew'd, at the same time of the year. But this argument is of no weight.

Therefore the most probable opinion is, that the world was created at that season of the year, which generally brings all things to perfection; when the fruits of the earth are fully ripe, and the harvest ready to be gather'd in, which is about autumn, the earth being then stored with plenty of all things, for the support of man and beast. It is not, indeed, very

^e Thus the learned *Witsius*, in *Symbol. Exercitat.* 8. § 78. exposes this notion, by referring to a particular relation given, by one, of mountains, valleys, seas, woods, and vast tracts of land, which are contain'd in the moon, and as describing the men that inhabit it, and the cities that are built by them, and other things relating hereto, which cannot be reckoned, in the opinion of sober men, any other than fabulous and romantick.

^b This, supposing the fowl to be produced out of the water, mix'd with earth, reconciles the seeming contradiction that there is between *Gen.* i. 20. and *Chap.* ii. 19. in the former of which it is said, the fowl were created *out of the water*, and in the latter, *out of the earth*.

ⁱ See *Quest.* XVII.

^k When we speak of the season of the year, we have a particular respect to that part of the earth, in which man at first resided; being sensible that the seasons of the year vary, according to the different situation of the earth.

^l ————— *Ver illud erat, Ver magnus agebat
Orbis, & Hybernus parcebant flatibus Euri.* *Virg. Georg.* 2.

280 *Things created, in what Season of the Year, and Condition.*

material, whether this can be determined or no; nevertheless, this seems the more probable opinion, inasmuch as the beginning of the civil year was fixed at that time. Accordingly, *the feast of ingathering*, which was at this season of the year, is said, in *Exod. xxiii. 16.* to be *in the end of the year*; therefore, as one year ended, the other began, at this time, and so continued, till, by a special providence, the beginning of the year was alter'd, in commemoration of *Israel's* deliverance out of *Egypt*. And, from that time, there was a known distinction among the *Jews*, between the beginning of the civil and the ecclesiastical year; the former of which was the same as it had been from the beginning of the world, and answers to our month *September*; from whence it is more than probable, that the world was created at that season of the year. We now proceed,

VI. To consider, the quality, or condition, in which God created all things, which were, at first, pronounced by him *very good*^m. It is certain, nothing imperfect can come out of the hand of God, and the goodness of things is their perfection. Every thing that was made, was made exactly agreeable to the *Idea*, or platform thereof, that was laid in the divine mind. All things were good, that is perfect, in their kind, and therefore there was not the least blemish in the work. Every thing was beautiful, as it was the effect of infinite wisdom, as well as almighty power. Whatever blemishes there are now in the creation, which are the consequence of the curse that sin has brought upon it, these were not in it at first, for that would have been a reflection on the author of it.

And there is another thing, in which the goodness of those things did consist, namely, as they were adapted to shew forth the glory of God in an objective way, whereby intelligent creatures might, as in a glass, behold the infinite perfections of the divine nature, which shine forth therein.

If any enquire, whether God could have made things more perfect than he did? it may easily be replied to this, that he never acted to the utmost of his power, the perfections of creatures were limited by his will; nevertheless, if any persons pretend to find any flaw, or defect of wisdom in the creation of all things, this is no other than a proud and

ignorant cavil, which men, through the corruption of their nature, are disposed to make against the great Creator of all things, who regard not the subserviency of things to answer the most valuable ends, and advance his glory, who, *in wisdom, has made them all*.

In this respect, the inferior parts of the creation were good; but, if we consider the intelligent part thereof, angels and men, they were good, in a higher sense. As there was no moral blemish in the creation, nor propensity, or inclination to sin, so these were endowed with such a kind of goodness, whereby they were fitted to glorify God, in a way agreeable to their superior natures, and behold and improve those displays of the divine perfections, which were visible in all his other works; which leads us farther to consider what is said concerning them, as the most excellent part of the creation.

QUEST. XVI. *How did God create angels?*

ANSW. God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.

THERE are two species of intelligent creatures, to wit, angels and men. The former of these are more excellent; and we are, in this *Answer*, led to speak concerning their nature, and the glorious works which they are engaged in: But let it be premised, that this is a doctrine that we could have known little or nothing of, by the light of nature. We might, indeed, from thence, have learned, that God has created some spiritual substances, such as the souls of men; and we might argue, from his power, that he could create other spirits, of different natures and powers, and that some of them might be without bodies, as the angels are; yet we could not have certainly determined that there is such a distinct order of creatures, without divine revelation, since they do not appear to, or visibly converse with us; and whatever impressions may, at any time, be made on our spirits, by good or bad angels, in a way of suggestion, yet this

could

^m Gen. i. 31.

could not have been so evidently distinguished, from the working of our own fancy or imagination, were we not assisted in our conceptions about this matter, by what we find in scripture, relating thereunto. Accordingly, it is from thence that the doctrine, which we are entering upon, is principally to be derived; and we shall consider it, as the subject-matter of this *Answer*, in *seven Heads*.

I. There is something supposed, namely, that there are such creatures as angels. This appears, from the account we have of them, in the beginning of the creation, of all things, *The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*^a; which can be no other than a metaphorical description of them. They are called the *morning stars*, as they exceed other creatures, as much in glory, as the stars do the lower parts of the creation. It would be a very absurd method of expounding scripture to take this in a literal sense, not only because the stars in the firmament do not appear to have been then created, but principally because these are represented, as engaged in a work peculiar to intelligent creatures; and they are called, the *sons of God*, as they were produced by him, and created in his image; whereas men, who are sometimes so called, were not then created; they are elsewhere called *spirits*^b, to distinguish them from material beings; and *a flame of fire*, to denote their agility and fervency, in executing the divine commands. 'Tis plain, the Psalmist hereby intends the angels; and therefore the words are not to be translated, as some do, *who maketh the winds his angels, and the flame of fire his ministers*, as denoting his making use of those creatures who act without design, to fulfil his pleasure; because the Apostle, to the *Hebrews*^c, expressly applies it to them, and renders the text in the same sense as it is in our translation. They are elsewhere stiled, *Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers*^d, to denote their being advanced to the highest dignity, and employ'd in the most honourable services. And that it is not men that the Apostle here speaks of, is evident, because he distinguishes the intelligent parts of the creation into visible and invisible; the visible he speaks of in the following words, *Ver. 18.* in which Christ is said to be *the Head of the body, the church*; therefore here he speaks

of invisible creatures advanced to these honours, and consequently he means hereby the angels.

Moreover it appears, that there are holy angels, because there are fallen angels, who are called, in scripture, devils, this is so evident, that it needs no proof; the many sins committed by their instigation, and the distress and misery which mankind is subject to, by their means, gives occasion to their being called, *The rulers of the darkness of this world*^e. And, because of their malicious opposition to the interest of Christ therein, *spiritual wickedness in high places*. Now it appears, from the Apostle *Jude's* account of them, that they once were holy; and they could not be otherwise, because they are creatures, and nothing impure can proceed out of the hand of God, and, while they were holy, they had their residence in heaven: This they lost, and are said *not to have kept their first estate, but left their own habitation*, being thrust out of it, as a punishment due to their rebellion, and to be *reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*^f. Now 'tis plain, from scripture, that it is only a part of the angels that left their first estate; the rest are called *holy angels*, and their number is very great: Thus they are described, as *an innumerable company*^g. This is necessary to be observed against the ancient, or modern *Sadducees*, who deny that there are either angels or spirits, whether good or bad.

II. We farther observe, that the angels are described, as to their nature, as incorporeal, and therefore called Spirits. 'Tis but a little, indeed, that we can know concerning the nature of spirits, in this present state; and the first *Ideas* that we have concerning them, are taken from the nature of our souls, as, in some respects, agreeing with that of angels. Accordingly, being spirits, they have a power of thinking, understanding, willing, chusing, or refusing, and are the subjects of moral government, being under a law, and capable of moral good or evil, happiness or misery.

Moreover, they have a power of moving, influencing, or acting upon material beings, even as the soul moves and influences the body, to which 'tis united. This we understand concerning the nature and power of angels, as spirits, by

^a Job xxxviii. 7.
^f Jude, Ver. 6.

^b Psal. civ. 4.
^g Heb. xii. 22.

^c Chap. i. 7.

^d Coloss. i. 16.

^e Eph. vi. 12.

comparing them with the nature of the soul; though there is this difference between them, that the souls of men are made to be united to bodies, and to act by and upon them, whereas angels are designed to exist and act without bodies; nevertheless, by the works, which are often, in scripture, ascribed to them, it appears that they have a power to act upon material beings. As for the conjecture of some of the Fathers^u, that these spirits are united to some bodies, though more fine and subtil than ours are, and accordingly invisible to us, we cannot but think it a groundless conceit; and therefore to assert it, is only to pretend to be wise above what is written, and to give too great a loose to our own fancies, without any solid argument.

III. It follows, from their being spirits, and incorporeal, that they are immortal, or incorruptible, since nothing is subject to death, or dissolution, but what is compounded of parts; for death is a dissolution of the composition of those parts, that were before united together; but this is proper to bodies. A spirit, indeed, might be annihilated; for the same power that brought it out of nothing, can reduce it again to nothing: But, since God has determined that they shall exist for ever, we must conclude that they are immortal, not only from the constitution of their nature, but by the will of God.

IV. Besides the excellency of their nature, as spirits, they have other super-added endowments; of which, *three* are mention'd in this *Answer*.

1. They were all created holy; and, indeed, it could not be otherwise, since nothing impure could come out of the hands of a God of infinite purity. Creatures make themselves sinners, they were not made so by him; for, if they were, how could he abhor sin, and punish it, as contrary to his holiness? nor could he have approved of all his works, as *very good*, when he had finished them, as he did^x, if he had created any of the angels in a state of enmity, opposition to, or rebellion against him.

2. They excel in knowledge, or in wisdom, which is the greatest beauty or advancement of knowledge. Accordingly, the highest instance of wisdom in men, is compared to the wisdom of an angel:

Thus the woman of Tekoa, when extolling David's wisdom, though with an hyperbolical strain of compliment, compares it to that of an *angel of God*^y; which proves, that it was a generally received opinion, that angels exceeded other creatures in wisdom.

3. They are said to be mighty in power: thus the Psalmist speaks of them, as *excelling in strength*^z; and the Apostle Paul, when speaking of Christ's being revealed from heaven, in his second coming, says, that it shall be *with his mighty angels*^a. And, since power is to be judged of by its effects, the great things, which they are sometimes represented, as having done in fulfilling their ministry, in defence of the church, or in overthrowing its enemies, is a certain evidence of the greatness of their power. Thus we read of the whole *Assyrian* host, consisting of *an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men*, being destroy'd in one night; not by the united power of an host of angels, but by one of them. *The angel of the Lord* did it; but this will more evidently appear, when, under a *following Head*, we speak of the ministry of angels.

V. These natural, or super-added endowments, how great soever they are, comparatively with those of other creatures, are subject to certain limitations; their perfections are derived, and therefore are finite. 'Tis true, they are holy, or without any sinful impurity; yet even their holiness falls infinitely short of God's, and therefore 'tis said concerning him, *Thou only art holy*^b; and elsewhere^c, speaking concerning the angels, who are, by a metonymy, called the *heavens*, 'tis said, *they are not clean in his sight*, that is, their holiness, though it be perfect in its kind, is but finite, and therefore infinitely below his, who is infinitely holy.

Moreover, though they are said, as has been before observed, to excel in knowledge, we must, notwithstanding, conclude, that they do not know all things; and therefore their wisdom, when compared with God's, deserves no better a character than that of *folly*^d; *His angels be charged with folly*. There are many things, which they are expressly said not to know, or to have but an imperfect knowledge of, or to receive the *Ideas* they have of them by degrees: thus *they know not the time of Christ's se-*

^u Vid. Augustin. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XV. cap. 23: Tertull. de Idololatriâ & alibi passim.

^x Gen. i. 31.

^y 2 Sam. xiv. 20.

^z Psal. ciii. 20.

^a 2 Thess. i. 7.

^b Rev. xv. 4.

^c Job xv. 15.

^d Job iv. 18.

cond coming^e; and they are represented as enquiring into the great mystery of man's redemption, or as *desiring to look into it*^f.

And to this let me add, that they do not know the hearts of men, at least not in such a way as God is said to *search the heart*, for that is represented as a branch of the divine glory^g. And, besides this, it may farther be observed, that they do not know future contingencies, unless it be by such a kind of knowledge, as amounts to little more than conjecture; or, if they attain to a more certain knowledge thereof, it is by divine revelation. For God appropriates this to himself, as a glory, from which all creatures are excluded; therefore he says, *Shew the things that are to come*, that is, future contingencies, *that we may know that ye are gods*^h; which implies, that this is more than what can be said of any finite mind, even that of an angel.

As to the way of their knowing things, 'tis generally supposed, by divines, that they know them not in a way of intuition, as God does, who is said to know all things in himself, by an underived knowledge; but whatever they know, is either communicated to them, by immediate divine revelation, or else is attain'd in a discursive way, as infering one thing from another; in which respect, the knowledge of the best of creatures appears to be but finite, and infinitely below that which is divine.

Again, though they are said to be mighty in power, yet 'tis with this limitation, that they are not omnipotent. There are some things, which are the effects of divine power, that angels are excluded from, as being too great for them; accordingly they were not employ'd in creating any part of the world, nor do they uphold it; for as it is a glory peculiar to God, *to be the Creator of the ends of the earth*, so he, exclusively of all others, is said *to uphold all things by the word of his power*.

And to this we may add, that we have no ground to conclude, that they are employ'd in the hand of providence, to maintain that constant and regular motion, that there is in the celestial bodies, as some of the ancient philosophersⁱ have seem'd to assert; for this is the immediate

work of God, without the agency of any creature subservient thereunto.

Again, to this let me add, that how great soever their power is, they cannot change the heart of man, take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh; or implant that principle of spiritual life and grace in the souls of men, whereby they are said to be *made partakers of a divine nature*, or *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; for that is ascribed to the exceeding greatness of the divine power, and 'tis a peculiar glory belonging to the Holy Spirit, whereby believers are said to be born from above; this therefore is too great for the power of angels to effect.

VI. We have an account of the work, or employment of angels; 'tis said, they execute the commands of God, and praise his name. The former of these will be more particularly consider'd, under a following *Answer*^k, when we are led to speak of their being employ'd by God, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy and justice; and therefore we shall now consider them, as engaged in the noble and delightful work of praise; they praise his name. For this end they were created; and, being perfectly holy and happy, they are fitted for, and, in the highest degree, devoted to this service. This work was begun by them as soon as ever they had a being; *they sang together*, and celebrated his praise in the beginning of the creation^l.

And when the Redeemer first came into this lower world, and thereby a work, more glorious than that of creation, was begun by him, they celebrated his birth with a triumphant song; as 'tis said, that, with the angel that brought the tidings thereof to the shepherds, there was a *multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will towards men*^m. Whether all the hosts of heaven were present at that solemnity, we know not; but there is sufficient ground to conclude, from the harmony that there is in the work and worship of the heavenly inhabitants, that they all celebrated his incarnation with their praises; and this was a part of that *worship*, which, upon this great occasion, they gave, by a divine war-

^e Matt. xxiv. 36.

^f 1 Pet. i. 12.

^g Jer. xvii. 10. 2 Chron. vi. 30.

^h Isai. xli. 23.

ⁱ This was the opinion of *Aristotle*, though he does not call them angels, but intelligent beings, for *angel* is a character belonging to them, derived only from scripture; neither do we find that this work is assigned to them, as a part of their ministry therein.

^k See Quest. XIX.

^l Job xxxviii. 7.

^m Luke ii. 13, 14.

284 *Harmony in Worship among Angels, but no Hierarchy.*

rant, to him, who was then brought into this lower world ⁿ.

Moreover, they praise God for particular mercies vouchsafed to the church, and for the success of the gospel in the conversion of sinners thereby; on which occasion, they express their joy, as our Saviour observes, though it be but *one sinner that repenteth* ^o. And,

Lastly, they are represented, as joining in worship with the saints in heaven; for which reason the Apostle, speaking concerning the communion that there is between the upper and the lower world, as well as the union between the saints departed, and the angels, in this work of praise, says, *Ye are come unto the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect* ^p; and they are also represented as joining with all others, which are *before the throne, the number of whom is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing* ^q.

This is a branch of that social worship, which they are engaged in; and since we cannot suppose but that it is perform'd with harmony, otherwise it wants a very considerable circumstance, necessary to render it beautiful, and becoming a state of perfection, we must conclude, that there is the greatest order among these heavenly ministers; but whether they are to be consider'd, as having a government, or hierarchy, among themselves, so that one is superior in office and dignity to others; or whether they have a kind of dominion over one another; or whether some are made partakers of privileges, that others are deprived of, this we pretend not to determine, since scripture is silent as to this matter. And what some have laid down, as though it were deduced from it, is altogether inconclusive; and therefore they, who express them-

selves so peremptorily on this subject, as though they had received it by divine inspiration, or were told it by some, who have been conversant among them in heaven, must be reckon'd among those whom the Apostle speaks of, who *intrude into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind* ^r.

The Papists are very fond of this notion, as being agreeable to that unscriptural hierarchy, which they establish in the church here on earth, which they pretend to be, in some respects, founded upon it, instead of better arguments to support it ^s. All the countenance which they pretend to be given to it, in scripture, is taken from the various characters, by which they are therein described, as *cherubims, seraphims, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, arch-angels*, all which expressions they suppose to signify various ranks and orders among them; and when they speak of three classes, or degrees of dignity and office, under which they are distributed, and that some of those characters are reduced to one, and others to another of them, this is nothing else but to impose their own chimerical fancies, as matters of faith; and when they speak of some of them, as being of a superior order, and admitted to greater honours than the rest, whom they compare to ministers of state, who always attend the throne of princes, or stand in their presence, and others that are employ'd in particular services for the good of the church, and are conversant in this lower world: This is a distinction which the scripture says nothing of; for they all behold the face of God in heaven, and are in his immediate presence; and they are all likewise called ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation.

The great oracle which they have recourse to, where the scripture is silent, is a spurious writing, that goes under the name of *Dionysius*, the *Areopagite*, concerning the *Celestial Hierarchy* ^t; which

ⁿ Heb. i. 6.

^o Luke xv. 7, 10.

^p Heb. xii. 22, 23.

^q Rev. v. 11, 12.

^r Coloss. ii. 18.

^s It is strenuously maintain'd by *Baronius*, *Bellarmino*, and many other of their writers; as also by many of the school-men, as *Durandus*, *Tho. Aquinas*, and others.

^t This book is sufficiently proved to be spurious, and not to have been known in the four or five first ages of the church, as not being mention'd by *Jerom*, *Gennadius*, and others, who make mention of the writers of their own and former ages, and pass their censures on them, as genuine or spurious. And, from others of the Fathers, who lived in those Centuries, it plainly appears, that the doctrines maintain'd in this book, concerning the celestial hierarchy, were not then known by the church. 'Tis also proved to be spurious, because the author thereof makes mention of holy places, such as, *Temples, Altars*, &c. for divine worship, and *Catechumens*, and the like, and many other things, unknown to the church till the fourth Century; and he uses the word *Hypostases* to signify the divine Persons, which was not used till then. He also speaks of the institution of Monks, and various sorts of them, which were not known till long after the Apostolic Age; yea, he quotes a passage out of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who lived in the third Century. These, and many other arguments, to the same purpose, are maintain'd, not only by Protestants, but some impartial Popish writers, which sufficiently prove it spurious. See *Dalleus De Scrip. Dionys. Areop.* and *Du Pin's History of Ecclesiastical Writers. Cent. I. Pag. 32—34.*

contains not only many things fabulous, but unworthy of him, who was converted at *Athens* by the Apostle *Paul's* ministry^u, as well as disagreeable to the sentiments of the church in the age in which he lived; therefore, passing by this vain and trifling conjecture, all that we can assert, concerning this matter, is, that there is a beautiful order among the angels, though not of this kind; and this appears very much in that social worship, which is perform'd by them.

And this leads us to enquire how they communicate their *Ideas* to each other, though destitute of organs of speech, like those that men have. That they do, some way or other, impart their minds to one another, is sufficiently evident, otherwise we cannot see how they could join together, or agree in that worship, which is perform'd by them, and those united *Hallelujahs*, with which they praise God, and so answer the end of their creation; that they converse together is evident, since they are represented as doing so, in several places of scripture: thus the prophet speaks of the angel that *talked with him*; he *went forth*, and another angel *went out to meet him*^x; and elsewhere it is said, concerning them, that one cried to another, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*^y; and the Apostle *John* speaks of an angel *ascending from the east, who cried with a loud voice to four other angels*^z, who were performing a part of their ministry here on earth, and giving them a charge relating thereto; and elsewhere he again represents one angel as speaking to another, and *crying with a loud voice, &c.*^a. In some of these instances, if the voices utter'd by them were real, this may be accounted for, by supposing that they assumed bodies for the same purpose, and so communicated their minds to each other, in a way not much unlike to what is done by man. But this is not their ordinary way of conversing with each other; notwithstanding, we may, from hence, infer, and from many other scriptures, that might be brought to the same purpose, that there is some way or other by which they communicate their thoughts to one another. How this is done, is hard to determine; whether it be barely by an act of willing, that others should know what they desire to impart to them,

or by what other methods 'tis perform'd; it is the safest way for us, and it would be no disparagement were we the wisest men on earth to acknowledge our ignorance of it, rather than to attempt to determine a thing so much out of our reach, in this imperfect state, in which we know so little of the nature or properties of spirits, especially those that are without bodies. It is therefore sufficient for us to conclude, that they converse together, when join'd in social worship; but how they do this, is altogether unknown to us.

VII. Notwithstanding all the advantages which the angels had from those natural endowments, with which they were created, yet it is farther observed, that they were subject to change. Absolute and independent immutability is an attribute peculiar to God; so that whatever immutability creatures have, it is by his will and power. Some of the angels, who were created holy, were not only subject to change, but they *kept not their first estate*^b, and, from being the sons of God, became enemies and rebels; which is an evident proof of the natural mutability of creatures, if not confirm'd in a state of holiness and happiness; and we have ground to conclude, from hence, that the rest might have fallen, as well as them, had they not been favour'd with the grace of confirmation, which render'd their state of blessedness unchangeable. But this will be farther consider'd, under a following *Answer*^c.

QUEST. XVII. *How did God create man?*

ANSW. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls, made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts, and

^u Acts xvii. 34.
^b Jude, ver. 6.

^x Zech. ii. 3.
^c See Quest. XIX.

^y Isai. vi. 3.

^z Rev. vii. 2, 3.

^a Chap. xix. 17.

286 Of God's creating Man, Male and Female.

power to fulfil it, with dominion over the creatures, yet subject to fall.

IN this *Answer* it is observed,

I. That man was created after all other creatures. There was a sort of climax, or gradation in the work of creation; and that the wisdom and power of God might be more admired herein, he proceeded from things that were less to those that were more perfect. Man, who is the most excellent creature in this lower world, was framed the last, inasmuch as God designed hereby not only to give a specimen of his power, wisdom, and goodness, but that the glory of those perfections, which shine forth in all his other works, might be adored and magnified by him, as a creature fitted for that purpose. And his being created after all other things, is not only an instance of the bounty and goodness of God, in that the world, which was designed to be the place of his abode, should be stored with all those provisions that were necessary for his entertainment and delight; but that he might hereby be induced to give him the glory that was due to his name, and all other creatures, that were formed before him, might be objects leading him to it.

II. As to what concerns the difference of sex, it is farther observed, that man was made male and female. *Adam* was first formed, concerning whom we read, which is a humbling consideration, that his *body was formed of the dust of the ground*, from whence he took his name. This God puts him in mind of, after his fall, when he says, *Dust thou art*^a. And the best of men have sometimes express'd the low thoughts they have of themselves, by acknowledging this as the first original of the human nature: Thus *Abraham*, when standing in the presence of God, says, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes*^c. And this character is consider'd, as universally belonging to mankind, when it is said, *Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was*^e.

As for the woman, it is said, she was formed of the rib of the man. The reason of her formation is particularly assigned, *It is not good that the man should*

be alone, I will make him an help meet for him^g. There was a garden planted for his delight, and the beasts of the earth brought, and given to him, as his property; and his sovereignty over them was express'd by his giving names to every living creature: But these were not fitted to be his companions, though designed for his use. He was, notwithstanding, alone; therefore God, designing him a greater degree of happiness, formed one that might be a partner with him, in all the enjoyments of this life, that hereby he might experience the blessing of a social life; and that, according to the laws of nature, by this means the world might be inhabited, and its Creator glorified, by a numerous seed, that should descend from him.

From *Adam's* being first formed, the Apostle infers his pre-eminence of sex^h; though not of nature; the woman being, in that respect, designed to be a sharer with him in his present condition, and future expectation. From her being formed of a rib, or, as some understand it, out of the side of man, some curious, or over-nice observations have been made, which it is needless to mention. The account, which the scripture gives of it, is, that her being part of himself, argued the nearness of relation, and unalienable affection, which ought to be between man and wife, as *Adam* observed, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*ⁱ; and our Saviour, as referring to the same thing, says, *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh*^k.

III. The next thing that may be observed, is, that these were the first parents of all mankind; for the Apostle expressly calls *Adam* the first man^l. And this is very agreeable to the account which *Moses* gives of his creation, on the sixth day, from the beginning of time. This is a truth so generally received, that it seems almost needless to insist any farther on the proof thereof. The very heathen, that knew not who the first man was, nor where, or when, he was created, did, notwithstanding, allow, in general, that there was one, from whom all descended; therefore when the Apostle *Paul* argued with them, that *God had made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth*^m, none of

^a Gen. iii. 19.

^c Gen. xviii. 27.

^e Eccl. xii. 7.

^g Gen. ii. 18.

^h 1 Tim. ii. 11—13.

compared with 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

ⁱ Gen. ii. 23, 24.

^k Matt. xix. 5.

^l 1 Cor. xv. 45.

^m Acts xvii. 26.

them

The fabulous Conjecture that there were Men before Adam. 287

them pretended to deny it. And, none who own the divine authority of scripture, ever questioned the account which *Moses* gives hereof, till a bold writer, about the middle of the last *Century*, published a book, in which he advanced a new and fabulous notion; that there was a world of men, who lived before *Adam* was createdⁿ, and that these were all heathen; and that *Moses* speaks of their creation, as what was many ages before *Adam*, in *Gen. i.* and of *Adam's* in *Chap. ii.* whom he supposes to have been created in some part of the world, which was then uninhabited, where he was designed to live, and to be the father of the church, which was to descend from him; and, being so far remote from the rest of mankind, he knew not that there were any other men besides himself, till his family increased, and some of them apostatised from the faith, and, in particular, *Cain* and his descendents went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt among them. And whereas *Adam* is called, by the Apostle *Paul*, the first man, he supposes that he is stiled so only as contradistinguished from *Christ*, who is called the second Man, designing thereby to compare the person, whom he supposes to have been the head of the Jewish church, with him who is the Head of the Christian church. And he insists largely on, and perverts that scripture, in *Rom. v. 13.* where it is said, *Until the law, sin was in the world*; as though the sense of it were, that there was a sinful generation of men in the world, before God erected his church, and gave laws to it, when he created *Adam*, as the head and father thereof; whereas the Apostle there speaks of sin's prevailing in the world before the law was given by *Moses*; and as for the historical account of the creation of man in scripture, 'tis plain that *Moses* speaks of the creation of man in general, male and female, *Gen. i. 27.* and, in *Chap. ii.* gives a particular account of the same thing, and speaks of the manner of the formation of *Adam* and *Eve*. Besides, when God had created *Adam*, it is expressly said, in *Gen. ii. 5.* that *there was not a man to till the ground*, therefore there was no other man living, which is directly contrary to this chimerical

opinion. And, if there had been a world of men before *Adam*, what occasion was there for him to be created out of the dust of the ground? He might have been the father of the church, and yet descended from one that was then in being, in a natural way; or, if God designed that he should live at a distance from the rest of the world, he might have called him from the place of his abode, as he afterwards did *Abraham*, without exerting power in creating him; and he might have order'd him to have taken a wife out of the world, without creating a woman for that purpose.

It would be too great a digression, nor would it answer any valuable end, for me to take notice of every particular argument brought in defence of this notion: But though the book we speak of, be not much known in the world, yet the notion is propagated and defended by many *Atheists* and *Deists*, who design hereby to bring the scripture-history and religion in general into contempt; therefore I am obliged, in opposition to them, to answer an objection or two.

Object. 1. If *Adam* was the first man, and his employment was tilling the ground, where had he those instruments of husbandry, that were necessary, in order thereto, and other things, to subserve the various occasions of life?

Ans. This may easily be answer'd, by supposing that he had a sufficiency of wisdom to find out every thing that was needful for his use and service, whatever improvement might be made in manual arts, by future ages; but this objection, though mentioned amongst the rest, is not much insisted on. Therefore,

Object. 2. There is another objection, which some think a little more plausible, taken from what is contain'd in *Gen. iv.* where we read of *Cain's* killing his brother *Abel*, which was a little before the hundred and thirtieth year of the world, as appears, by comparing *Chap. v. 3.* with *Chap. iv. 25.* in which it is said, *Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat Seth*; upon which occasion, his wife acknowledges it as a mercy, that *God had appointed her another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.* Now, if we observe the consequence of this mur-

ⁿ This book, which is called, *Systema Theologicum*, in which this matter is pretended to be defended, was published by one *Peirerius*, about the middle of the last *Century*; and, being written in *Latin*, was read by a great many of the learned world: And, inasmuch as the sense of many scriptures is strained by him to defend it, and hereby contempt was cast upon scripture in general, and occasion given to many, who are so disposed, to reproach and burlesque it; therefore some have thought it worth their while to take notice of, and confute this new doctrine; after which, the author thereof, either being convinced of his error thereby, as some suppose, or being afraid lest he should suffer persecution for it, recanted his opinion, and turn'd Papist.

288 *The Conjecture that there were Men before Adam, confuted.*

der; how *Cain*, as it is said, in *Chap. iv. 16. went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod*; and, in *Ver. 17. that he built a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son, Enoch*; from whence they infer, that, in a little above *an hundred and thirty* years after the world was created, there were several colonies settled in places remote from the land of *Eden*, where *Adam*, and his posterity, dwelt; and the inhabitants of those countries were of a different religion from him, otherwise *Cain's* living among them would not be stiled, his *going out from the presence of the Lord*. And it is not said, that *Cain* peopled that land, but he went there, that is, dwelt, amongst the inhabitants thereof; and it must be by their assistance that he built this city, inasmuch as it is probable that the art of building, at this time, was hardly known by our first parents, and their descendents; but they lived, separate from the world, in tents, and worship'd God in that way, which they received by divine revelation, being but few in number, while other parts of the world might be as much peopled as they are, at this day.

Ans. But to this it may be answer'd; that as this chimerical opinion sets aside, or perverts the scripture-account of things, so the absurdity of it may be easily manifested. And,

I. If they suppose that the number of *Adam's* posterity were small, and inconsiderable, when *Cain* slew his brother, and built the city before-mentioned, this will appear to be an ungrounded conjecture, if the blessing, which God confer'd on man in his first creation, of *increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth*°, took place, as it doubtless did, and that in an uncommon degree, the necessity of things requiring it; therefore it is not absurd to suppose, that, at least, as many children were generally born at a birth, and in as early an age of the mother's life, as have been, or are, in any uncommon instances in later ages. It is also very probable, that the time of child-bearing continued many years longer than it now doth, in proportion to the number of years, in which the life of man exceeded the present standard thereof; and, if the age of man was extended to *eight or nine hundred* years, we may conclude that there were but few that died young. If these things be taken for granted, which seem not, in the least,

improbable, any one, who is curious in his enquiries about this matter, and desires to know what a number of people might be born in *One hundred and thirty* years, will find it will be so great, that they might spread themselves through many countries, far distant from the place where *Adam* dwelt; and therefore there is no need to suppose, that those, with whom *Cain* dwelt in the *land of Nod*, were persons that lived before *Adam* was created.

But that this may more abundantly appear, let it be farther consider'd, that though we read of *Cain's going out from the presence of the Lord*, and his dwelling in the *land of Nod*, and *building a city*, immediately after the account of *Abel's* death, and therefore it is taken for granted, that this was done soon after, that is, about the *Hundred and thirtieth* year of the world; yet there is no account that this was done immediately, or some few years after, in scripture, which contains the history of the life of *Cain*, in a few *Verses*, without any chronological account of the time, when these things were said to be done by him, and therefore it seems probable, that this was done some *hundreds* of years after *Cain* slew *Abel*; so that we need not enquire what a number of persons might be in the world in *One hundred and thirty* years, but in *seven or eight hundred* years, and then the world might be almost as full of people, as it is now at present, and then the greatest part of the world might be also degenerate, and strangers to the true religion; so that *Cain* might easily be said to go out of the presence of the Lord, and choose to live with those that were apostates from him, and served other gods; therefore no advantage is gain'd against the scripture-history by those, who, in contempt of it, defend this ill-grounded opinion.

Thus we have consider'd man, as created male and female, and our first parents, as the common stock, or root, from whence all descended; we shall now take a view of the constitution, or frame of the human nature, and consider,

IV. The two constituent parts of man, namely, the soul and body. With respect to the former of these, he is, as it were, allied to angels, or, to use the scripture-expression, *made a little lower* than them^p. As to the other, which is his inferior part, to wit, the body, he is *of the earth*,

earthly,

° Gen. i. 28.

^p Psal. viii. 5.

Man excels other Creatures as to his Body and Soul. 289

earthly, and set upon a level with the lower parts of the creation. And here we shall,

1. Consider the body of man, inasmuch as it was first formed before the soul; and according to the course and laws of nature, it is first fashion'd in the womb, and then the soul is united to it, when it is organised, and fitted for its reception: There are many things very wonderful in the structure of human bodies, which might well give occasion to the inspired writer to say, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*^a. This is a subject that would afford us much matter to enlarge on, and, from thence, to take occasion to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this part of his work.

Many things might be observed from the shape, and erect posture thereof, and the several conveniencies that arise from thence, and how we are hereby instructed that we were not born to look downwards to the earth, but up to heaven, from whence our chief happiness is derived. We might here consider the various parts of the body, whereof none are superfluous or redundant, and their convenient situation for their respective uses; the harmony and contexture thereof, and the subserviency of one part to another; and particularly, how it is so order'd by the wisdom of the Creator, that those parts, which are most necessary for the preservation of life, which, if hurt, would occasion immediate death, are placed most inward, that they might be sufficiently defended from all external injuries that might befall them; and also the disposition of those parts that are the organs of sense, and their contexture, whereby they are fitted to exert themselves, in such a way, as is most proper to answer the ends thereof. We might also consider the temperature of the body, whereby its health and vigour is maintain'd; and that vast variety that there is in the countenances, and voices of men, in which there is hardly an exact similitude in any two persons in the world; and the wise end designed by God herein, for the advantage of mankind in general: These things might have been particularly insisted on, and have afforded many useful observations; but to enlarge on this *Head*, as it deserves, would be to divert too much from our present design; and it will be very difficult for any one to treat on this subject with more advan-

tage than it has been done, by several learned and judicious writers, being set in a much clearer light than it has been in former ages, by those improvements, which have been lately made in anatomy; and it is insisted on so particularly, and with such demonstrative evidence, by them, that I shall rather choose to refer the reader to those writings, in which it is contain'd, than insist on it^r.

All that I shall farther observe is, that there is something wonderful in that natural heat that is continued in the bodies of men, for so many years together, and in the motion of the heart, the circulation of the blood and juices, the continual supply of animal spirits, and their subserviency to muscular motion; these things, and many other of the like nature, are all wonderful in the bodies of men.

If it be objected, that there are other creatures, who, in some respects, excel men, as to what concerns their bodies, and the powers thereof; as the vulture, and many other creatures, in quickness of sight and hearing; the dog in the sense of smelling, and many others excel them in strength and swiftness; and some inanimate creatures, as the sun, and other heavenly bodies, in beauty.

To this it may be answer'd: That the bodies of men must be allowed to have a superior excellency, if consider'd as united to their souls, and render'd more capable of glorifying God, and enjoying that happiness, which no creatures, below them, are capable of. It is true, man is not endowed with such quickness of sense, strength of body, and swiftness of motion, as many other creatures are; some of which endowments tend to the preservation of their own lives; others are conducive to the advantage of man, who has every thing, in the frame of his nature, necessary to his happiness, agreeable to his present station of life, for his glorifying God, and answering higher ends than other creatures were made for; so that if we judge of the excellencies of the human nature, we must conceive of man, more especially as to that more noble part of which he consists. Accordingly,

2. We shall consider him as having a rational and immortal soul, which not only gives a relative excellency to the body, to which it is united, and, by its union therewith, preserves it from corruption, but uses the various organs

^a Psal. cxxxix. 14.

^r See Ray's Wisdom of God, in the work of Creation, Part II. and Derham's Physico-Theology, Book V.

thereof, to put forth actions, which are under the conduct of reason; and that which renders it still more excellent, is, that it is capable of being conversant about objects abstracted from matter, and of knowing and enjoying God. And whatsoever obstructions it may meet with from the temperament of the body, to which it is united, or what uneasiness soever it may be exposed to from its sympathy therewith; yet none of those things, which tend to destroy the body, or separate it from the soul, can affect the soul so far, as to take away its power of acting, but, when separate from it, it remains immortal, and is capable of farther improvements, and a greater degree of happiness.

We might here proceed to prove the immortality of the soul; but that we shall have occasion more particularly to do, under a following *Answer*; when we consider the souls of believers, as made perfect in holiness, and thereby fitted for, and afterwards received into heaven, having escaped the grave, (in which the body is to be detained until the resurrection) which is the consequence of its immortality. And therefore we proceed,

V. To consider another excellency of the human nature, as man was made after the image of God. To be made a little lower than the angels, as he is represented by the Psalmist, in *Psal. viii. 5.* is a very great honour confer'd on him: But what can be said greater of him, than that he was made after the image of God? However, tho' this be a scripture-expression, denoting the highest excellency and privilege, yet it is to be explain'd consistently with that infinite distance that there is between God and the creature. This glorious character, put upon him, does not argue him to partake of any divine perfection; nor is it inconsistent with the nothingness of the best of finite beings, when compared with God; for whatever likeness there is in man to him, there is, at the same time, an infinite dissimilitude, or disproportion, as was before observ'd, when we consider'd the difference between those divine attributes, which are called incommunicable, from others, which some call communicable.

If it be enquired, wherein the image of God in man consists? It would be preposterous and absurd, to the last de-

gree, to suppose that this has any respect to the lineaments of the body; for there is a direct opposition, rather than similitude, between the spirituality of the divine nature, and the bodies of men. And, indeed, it would have been needless to have mention'd this; had not some given occasion for it, by perverting the sense of those scriptures, in which God is represented, in a metaphorical way, in condescension to our common mode of speaking, as though he had a body, or bodily parts; from whence they have infer'd, that he assumed a body, at first, as a model, according to which he would frame that of man; which is not only absurd, but blasphemous, and carries its own confutation in it.

There are others, who suppose that man was made after the image of Christ's human nature; which, though it doth not altogether contain so vile a suggestion as the former, yet 'tis groundless and absurd, inasmuch as Christ was made after the likeness of man, as to what concerns his human nature^u; and man, in that respect, was not made after his image.

And to this let me add, that when the scripture speaks of man, as made after the image of God, it plainly gives us ground to distinguish between it and that glory, which is peculiar to Christ, who is said not only to be made after his image, but to be *the image of the invisible God*^x, and the *express image of his person*^y; and therefore that there is, in this respect, such a similitude between the Father and Son, as cannot, in any sense, be applied to the likeness, which is said to be between God and the creature.

Moreover, when we speak of man, as made after the image of God, as consisting in some finite perfections communicated to him, we must carefully fence against the least supposition, as though man were made partaker of any of the divine perfections. It is true, the Apostle speaks concerning believers, as being made *partakers of the divine nature*^z, for the understanding of which we must take heed, that we do not pervert the mind of the Holy Ghost herein; for nothing is intended by this expression, in which the image of God is set forth, but a sanctified nature, or, as I would rather choose to render it, *a divine nature*, derived from, and, in some respects, conformed to him, but yet infinitely below him.

^f See Vol. II. Quest. LXXXVI.

^g See Pag. 53, 54.

^u Phil. ii. 7.

^x Col. i. 15.

^y Heb. i. 3.

^z 2 Pet. i. 4.

Wherein the Image of God, in Man, consisted. 291

This image of God in man, in this *Answer*, is said to consist particularly in three things.

1. In knowledge. This is what we generally call the natural image of God in man, which he is endowed with, as an intelligent creature; not that the degree of knowledge, which the best of men are capable of, contains in it any thing properly divine, as to its formal nature; for there is a greater disproportion between the infinite knowledge of the divine mind, and that of a finite creature, than there is between the ocean and a drop of water: But it signifies, that as God has a comprehensive knowledge of all things, man has the knowledge of some things, agreeable to his finite capacity, communicated to him; and thus we are to understand the Apostle's words, when he speaks of man's being *renew'd in knowledge, after the image of him that created him*^a.

2. It consists in righteousness and holiness. This some call the moral image of God in man; or, especially if we consider it as restor'd in sanctification, it may more properly be called his supernatural image, and it consists in the rectitude of the human nature, as opposed to that sinful deformity and blemish, which renders fallen man unlike to him. Therefore we must consider him, at first, as made upright^b, so that there was not the least tincture, or taint of sin, in his nature, or any disposition, or inclination to it; but all the powers and faculties of the soul were disposed to answer the ends of its creation, and thereby to glorify God.

And to this some add, that the image of God, in man, consisted in blessedness; so that as God is infinitely blessed in the enjoyment of his own perfections, man was, in his way and measure, blessed, in possessing and enjoying those perfections, which he received from God. But, though this be true, yet I would rather choose to keep close to the scripture-mode of speaking, which represents the image of God in man, as consisting in *righteousness and true holiness*^c.

Man, being thus made after the image of God, is farther said, in this *Answer*, to have the law of God written in his heart, and power to fulfil it. Herein God first made, and then dealt with him as a reasonable creature, the subject of moral government; and, that this law might be perfectly understood, it was written on his heart, that hereby he might have a

natural knowledge of the rule of his obedience, and might, with as little difficulty, be apprised of his duty to God, as he was of any thing that he knew, as an intelligent creature.

And inasmuch as he was indispensably obliged to yield obedience to this law, and the consequence of violating it would be his ruin, God, as a just and gracious Sovereign, gave him ability to fulfil it; so that he might not, without his own fault, by a necessity of nature, rebel against him, and so plunge himself into inevitable misery.

3. It is farther observed, that the image of God, in man, consisted in man's dominion over the creatures. This is expressly revealed in scripture, when God says, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*^d; and the Psalmist describes this dominion in other words, though not much differing, as to the general import thereof, when he says, *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen; yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas*^e. This dominion consisted in the right which he had to use and dispose of the inferior creatures, for his comfort and delight, and to serve him, in all things necessary, for the glorifying his Creator, though he had no right, nor inclination, in his state of integrity, to abuse them, as fallen man does, in various instances.

VI. The last thing observed in this *Answer* is, that, notwithstanding the advantageous circumstances, in which man was created, yet he was subject to fall; by which we are not to understand that he was forced or compell'd to fall, thro' any necessity of nature; for that would have been inconsistent with the liberty of his will to what was good, or that rectitude of nature, whereby he was not only fitted to perform perfect obedience, but to avoid every thing that had a tendency to render him guilty before God, and thereby to ruin him.

As for the devil, he had no power to force the will; nor could he lay any snare to entangle and destroy man, but what he had wisdom enough, had he improved

^a Col. iii. 10.

^b Eccl. vii. 29.

^c Eph. iv. 24.

^d Gen. i. 26.

^e Psal. viii. 6—8.

his faculties as he ought, to have avoided: But, notwithstanding all this, it is evident that he was subject to fall, for that appears by the event; so that, tho' he had no disposition to sin in his nature, for God could not create a person in such a state, since that would render him the author of sin, yet he did not determine to prevent it; though this, as will be hereafter consider'd, was a privilege which man would have attain'd to, according to the tenor of the covenant he was under, had he perform'd the conditions thereof, and so would have been confirm'd in holiness and happiness; but this, 'tis certain, he was not at first, because he fell: But of this, more under a following *Answer*.

QUEST. XVIII. *What are God's works of providence?*

ANSW. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

IN speaking to this *Answer*, we must consider what we are to understand by providence in general. It supposes a creature brought into being; and consists in God's doing every thing that is necessary for the continuance thereof, and in his ordering and over-ruling second causes, to produce their respective effects, under the direction of his infinite wisdom, and the influence of his almighty power. It is owing to this that all things do not sink again into nothing, or that every thing has what it wants to render it fit to answer the end designed in the creation thereof. Pursuant to this general description of providence, it may be consider'd as consisting of two branches, namely, God's upholding, or preserving, all creatures; and enabling them to act by his divine concurrence or influence: and his governing or ordering them, and all their actions, for his own glory.

I. That God upholds all things. This he is expressly said to do, *by the word of his power*^f; and it may be farther evinced, if we consider that God alone is independent, and self-sufficient, therefore the

Idea of a creature implies in it dependence; that which depended on God for its being, must depend on him for the continuance thereof. If any creature, in this lower world, could preserve it self, then surely this might be said of man, the most excellent part thereof: But it is certain, that man cannot preserve himself; for if he could, he would not be subject to those decays of nature, or those daily infirmities, which all are liable unto; and he would, doubtless, preserve himself from dying, for that is agreeable to the dictates of nature, which would, were it possible for him to do it, prevent it self from being dissolved. And if man could preserve himself in being, he might, and doubtless would, by his own skill, maintain himself in a prosperous condition in this world, and always lead a happy life, since this is what nature cannot but desire: But, inasmuch as all are liable to the afflictions and miseries of this present state, it plainly argues that they are unavoidable, and consequently that there is a providence that maintains men, and all other creatures, in that state in which they are.

In considering the upholding providence of God, we must observe, that it is either immediate, or mediate. The former of these consists in his exerting that power, by which we live, move, and act, which is sometimes called the divine manutency; and this cannot be exerted by a finite medium, any more than that power that brought all things into being.

But besides this, God is said, according to the fixed laws of nature, to preserve his creatures by the instrumentality of second causes. Thus life is maintain'd by the air in which we breathe, and the food, by which we are nourished; and every thing that tends to our comfort in life, is communicated to us by second causes, under the influence and direction of providence, to which it is as much to be ascribed, as though it were brought about without means: thus *Jacob* considers God, as giving him *bread to eat, and raiment to put on*^g, whatever diligence or industry was used by him to attain them; and God is elsewhere said *to give food to all flesh*^h; and, concerning brute creatures, it is said, *These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season; that thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good*ⁱ.

^f Heb. i. 3.

^g Gen. xxviii. 20.

^h Psal. cxxxvi. 25.

ⁱ Psal. civ. 27, 28.

II. God governs all things by his providence, so that nothing happens by chance to him. This appears from those admirable displays of wisdom, which come under our daily observation, in the government of the world. Many things are order'd to subserve such ends, as are attain'd by them without their own knowledge; as the sun, and other heavenly bodies, which are a common blessing to this lower world; so the rain, the air, vapours, minerals, beasts, vegetables, and all other creatures below men, answer their respective ends, without their own design, and not by the will, or management of any intelligent creature, therefore it must be by the direction of providence.

That there is a providence, that governs the world, is so obvious a truth, that it has been denied by none, but the most stupid part of mankind, who wholly abandon'd themselves to sensuality and libertinism, and hardly owned that there is a God, or such things as moral good or evil; and these scarce deserve the name of men^k. All others, I say, have own'd a providence, as what is the necessary consequence of the belief of a God, and therefore it is a doctrine founded in the very nature of man; so that the heathen, who have had no other light than that affords, have express'd their belief of it, and have compared the divine Being to a Pilot, who sits at the helm, and steers the ship; or to one that guides the chariot where he pleases; or to a General, that marshals and gives directions to the soldiers under his command; or to a King, that sits on the throne, and gives laws to all his subjects. Accordingly the Apostle Paul, when arguing with the *Athenians*, from principles which they maintain'd, takes it for granted, as what would not be contested by them, that there was a providence, when he says, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*^l. And, indeed, this truth appears to have been

universally believed, in the world; by men of all religions, whether true, or false. As it is the foundation of all true worship; so, that worship, which was performed by the heathen, as derived partly from the light of nature, and partly from tradition; and those prayers, that were directed to God, and altars erected for his service; all argue their belief, not only of a God, but of a providence; so that this doctrine is agreeable to the light of nature, as well as plainly evinced from scripture.

III. The providence of God extends it self to all the actions of creatures. That this may appear, let it be consider'd; that there are innumerable effects produced by, what we call, second causes; this is allowed by all. Moreover, every second cause implies, that there is a first cause, that guides and directs it. Now, no creature is the first cause of any action, for that is peculiar to God, therefore all creatures act under his influence, that is, by his providence. If it is *in God*, not only that *we live*, but *move*, and act, then there is no motion, or action in the world, whether in things with, or without life, but is under the influence of providence. Therefore we shall proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about all things, the least as well as the greatest, and about things that are agreeable, or contrary to the laws of nature, and particularly how it is conversant about the actions of intelligent creatures, such as angels and men.

I. The greatest things are not above, nor the least and most inconsiderable below the care and influence of providence, and consequently it must extend it self to all things. The most excellent of finite beings are but creatures, and therefore they are dependent upon God, as much as the least: thus it is said, *He doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, as well as among the inhabitants of the earth*^m. Sometimes we read of the providence of

^k It was denied, indeed, by the *Epicureans*, who were detested by the better sort of Heathen, and reckon'd the libertines of the respective ages, in which they lived; and, though they may occasionally speak of a God, yet were deem'd no better than Atheists. *Diogenes Laertius* [Vid. in *Vit. Epicuri*, Lib. X.] in the close of the life of *Epicurus*, gives a brief account of his sentiments about religion, which he lays down in several short Aphorisms; the first of which begins with this memorable passage, *Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἀθάνατον ἔτε αὐτὸ πρᾶγμα ἔχει ἔτε ἄλλα παρέχει*, *Quod beatum & immortale est neque ipsum negotia habet neque alii præbet*; which expression some of the wiser Heathen have taken just offence at. And accordingly *Cicero*, [Vid. *ejusd.* Lib. I. *De Nat. Deor.*] referring to this passage, says, that whatever veneration *Epicurus* pretended to have for the gods, yet he was no better than an Atheist, and brought a god into his philosophy, that he might not fall under the displeasure of the senate at *Athens*: thus he says, *Novi ego Epicureos omnia Sigilla venerantes; quanquam video nonnullis videri Epicurum, ne in offensionem Atheniensium caderet, verbis reliquisse Deos, re sustulisse*: And *Lactantius* observes the same thing concerning him, and describes him as a deceiver and a hypocrite, *Hic vero si aliud sensit & aliud locutus est quid aliud appellandus est quam deceptor, bilinguis, malus, & propterea stultus*? Vid. *Lactant. de Ira Dei*, cap. 4. And as for the poets, it was only the most vain among them, who gave countenance to immorality, and endeavour'd to debauch the age in which they lived, that gave into this notion; and, in our age, this seems to be one of the first principles of *Deism*.

^l Acts xvii. 28.

^m Dan. iv. 35.

294 Of various Things subject to the Providence of God.

God, as conversant about the most glorious parts of the frame of nature: It is by his influence that the sun appears to perform its regular motions; he hath fixed it in the heavens, as in a tabernacle appointed for it. And those creatures that are most formidable to men, as the *Leviathan*, which is represented as the fiercest of all creatures, who abide in the sea, and the *Lion* of all the beasts of the forest; these are described as subject to his providence, and receiving their provisions from itⁿ; and the inconsiderable *sparrow* doth not fall to the ground without it^o; and the very hairs of our head are all number'd; which is a proverbial expression, to denote the particular concern of providence, as conversant about the most minute actions of life.

2. The providence of God is conversant about those things which come to pass, either agreeably, or contrary, to the fixed laws of nature, the whole frame whereof is held together by him: The successive returns of *seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night*, are all order'd by him^p; the elements and meteors are subject to his appointment; *Fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy wind, fulfil his word^q. He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure; when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder^r.*

And as for effects, that are above, or contrary to the course of nature, these are subject to, and order'd by, his providence. It was contrary to the course of nature for the *Ravens*, which are birds of prey, to bring provisions to mankind, yet these were order'd to bring a supply of food to the prophet *Elijah*^s. And the *Lions*, who knew no difference between *Daniel* and his persecutors, and were naturally inclined to devour one, as well as the other, were obliged to make a distinction between them, and not to hurt the one, but immediately to devour the other^t. And a *Whale* was provided, by providence, to receive and bring the prophet *Jonah* to land, when cast into the sea^u. So the fire had no power over *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego*, when thrown into it, but immediately consumed those who were order'd to cast them in^v.

3. We shall consider providence, as conversant about intelligent creatures, and

more particularly man, the most excellent creature in this lower world: He is, as it were, the peculiar care, and darling of providence; as it has render'd him capable of enjoying the blessings of both worlds, fitted him to glorify God actively, as well as objectively, and governs him in a way suited to his nature, and as one who is designed for greater things, than other creatures below him are capable of. Here we shall consider the providence of God, as ordering the state and condition of men in this world, and then speak more particularly of it, as conversant about the moral actions of men, consider'd as good or bad.

First, To consider the providence of God, as it respects the state and condition of man in this life; and, in particular, what respects not only his natural, but religious interests.

(1.) There is a peculiar care of providence extended towards us, in our birth and infancy: The Psalmist acknowledges this, when he says, *Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts; I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly^w.* Providence has provided the breast, and the most proper food contain'd therein, for the nourishment of the infant, at its first coming into the world; and it has put those tender bowels into the parents, to whose immediate care it is committed, that, without any arguments, or persuasive motives thereunto, besides what nature suggests, they cannot, unless divested of all humanity, and becoming worse than brutes, neglect and expose it to harm: thus the prophet says, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb^x?* Therefore, be the parents never so poor, there is something in nature that inclines them rather to suffer themselves, than that the helpless infant should be exposed to suffer through their neglect; which is a peculiar instance of the care of providence. To this we may add, the time, and place in which we were born, or live; the circumstances of our parents, as to what concerns the world, especially if they are such who are religious themselves, and earnestly desire that their children may become so, and endeavour to promote their spiritual, as well as their temporal welfare. These

ⁿ Job xli. Psal. civ. 21.

^o Matt. x. 29, 30.

^p Gen. viii. 22.

^q Psal. cxlviii. 8.

^r Job xxviii.

24—26.

^s 1 Kings xvii. 4.

^t Dan. vi. 22, 24.

^u Chap. i. 17.

^v Dan. iii. 22, 27.

^w Psal. xxii. 9, 10.

^x Isai. xlix. 15.

are all instances of the care of providence.

(2.) We shall now consider the concern of providence for man in his childhood, and advancing years. This discovers it self in furnishing us with natural capacities to receive instruction, which are daily improved, as we grow in years; and, though every one has not an equal degree of parts, fitting him for some station in life, that others are qualified for, yet most are endowed with that degree thereof, as may fit them for the station of life, in which they are placed, so that they may glorify God some way or other, in their generation.

(3.) We shall consider the care of providence, respecting various other ages and conditions of life. It is this that fixes the bounds of our habitation, determines and over-rules the advantages or disadvantages of conversation; the secular callings, or employments, which we are engaged in, together with the issue and success thereof. Again, health and sickness, riches and poverty, the favour or frowns of men; the term of life, whether long or short, all these are under the direction of providence: *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure*^a. Likewise, as to what respects the injurious treatment we meet with from men; providence is so far concern'd about it, as that it sometimes permits it for the trial of our graces; and at other times averts the evil design'd against us, by softening their tempers, allaying their resentments; as in the instance of what respected *Laban's* and *Esau's* behaviour towards *Jacob*; or else finds some way to deliver us from the evil intended against us.

(4.) We shall now consider the providence of God, as respecting, more especially, the spiritual concerns of his people. There are some kind footsteps thereof, that have a more immediate subserviency to their conversion; particularly, their being placed under the means of grace, either bringing the gospel to them, or ordering their abode where it is preached, and that in such a way, as is most adapted to awaken, instruct, convert, or reprove, as means conducive to that great end. Moreover, it is very remarkable in casting our lot, where we may contract friendship and intimacy with those, whose conversation and example may be made of use

to us, for our conviction, imitation, and conversion.

And to this let me add, that sometimes there is a peculiar hand of providence, in sending afflictions, which are sanctified, and render'd means of grace, and have a tendency to awaken men out of their carnal security: This is one way, whereby God speaks to man, to *withdraw him from his purpose, and hide pride from him*^b. Sometimes God makes his exemplary judgments, that are abroad in the world, effectual to warn others to flee from the wrath to come. And as for the preaching of the gospel, there is a peculiar hand of providence, sometimes in giving a suitable word, in which case God often over-rules the thoughts and studies of his ministers; so that they are, as it were, directed without their own forethought relating to this event, to insist on such a subject, that God designs to make instrumental for the conversion of souls: This he sets home on the consciences of men, keeps it fix'd on the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, and enables them to improve it to his glory in the conduct of their lives.

Secondly, We shall proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about the actions of men: If other creatures are dependent on him, in acting, as well as existing, then certainly man must not be exempted from this dependance. There are several scriptures which speak of intelligent creatures, as under the influence of providence: thus 'tis said, *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will*^c; and elsewhere the prophet says, *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; 'tis not in man that walketh to direct his steps*^d; that is, he cannot manage himself in the conduct of life, either as an intelligent creature, or as a believer, without supposing the natural or spiritual influence of divine providence.

Now these actions are consider'd as moral, and so agreeable or contrary to the divine law, in which different respects they are, either good or bad.

(1.) We shall consider the providence of God, as conversant about the good actions of men; and 'tis so, not only by upholding the powers and faculties of the soul, in acting, or in giving a law, which is the rule thereof; nor is it only conversant about them, in an objective way, or

^a Job xxi. 23—25.

^b Job xxxiii. 14, 17, 19.

^c Prov. xxi. 1.

^d Jer. x. 23.

by moral swasion, as affording rational arguments or inducements thereunto, but as implanting and exciting that principle, by which we act; especially, as it respects the work of grace in the souls of men, which is what we call the gracious dispensation of providence, exercised towards men, not barely as intelligent creatures, but as believers. But this we shall not insist on at present, because we shall be led to speak to it under some following *Answers*, which more particularly set forth the grace of God, as display'd in the gospel. We are now to consider the actions of men in a more general view; which, when we stile them good, it is only as containing in them a less degree of conformity to the divine law; but refer the consideration of the goodness of actions, as under the influence of special grace, to its proper place. All that we shall observe at present is, that every thing that is good, in the actions of intelligent creatures, is under the direction and influence of providence. This does not carry the least appearance of a reflection on the divine perfections, while we suppose God to be the Governor of intelligent creatures, acting as such; and therefore, I presume, it will not be much contested, by any who allow a providence in general. But,

(2.) We shall proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about evil actions. This is a subject which contains in it a very great difficulty; for we must use the utmost caution, lest we advance any thing that may argue him to be the author of sin; and yet we are not to suppose that the providence of God is to be wholly excluded from those actions that are sinful; for there is certainly some meaning in such scriptures as these, when God says, concerning *Pharaoh*, *I will harden his heart*^e; and, *Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him; for the Lord thy God hardened his heart, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand*^f; and elsewhere 'tis said, concerning *Shimei*, *The Lord said unto him, Curse David*^g; and, concerning *Joseph's brethren*, who sold him into *Egypt*, 'tis said, *It was not you that sent me hither, but God*^h; and, concerning the false prophets that deceived *Ahab*, 'tis said, *The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets*ⁱ. These, and such-like scriptures, are not to be expunged out of the Bible, but explain'd in a way consistent with the di-

vine perfections; and nothing can be infer'd from them, if this be not, that the providence of God is some way conversant about those actions that are sinful; but yet it is not in such a way, as either argues him to be the author or approver of sin. Accordingly I would choose to express my self, concerning this matter, to this effect: That the providence of God is conversant about those actions, to which sin is annex'd, rather than that it is conversant about sin it self, or the obliquity, or sinfulness thereof. Now, that we may understand this matter, we must distinguish between what is natural, and what is sinful in an action; the former is from God; the latter, from our selves: This is often illustrated by such similitudes as these. The motion of a bowl is from the hand that throws it; but the irregularity of the motion is from the byass that turns it aside. So the motion of a horse is excited by the whip, or spur of the rider; but if it goes lame, the defect, or halting that it has in its motion, proceeds from an inward indisposition in the horse, and not from the rider. Others illustrate it by a similitude, taken from the sun's drawing forth vapours from the earth, by that heat, which has a tendency to exhale them; but the stench that attends what is exhaled from a dunghill, is not from the sun, but from the nature of the subject from whence it is drawn forth. So the providence of God enables sinners to act in a natural way; but the sinfulness, irregularity, or moral defects, that attend those actions, is from the corruption of our own nature: or, to speak more plainly, the man that blasphemes, could not think, or utter his blasphemy, without the concurrence of the common providence of God, which enables him to think or speak, these are natural actions; but that the thoughts, or tongue, should be set against God, or goodness, that is from the depravity of our nature.

Again, to kill, or take away the life of a man, is, in some respects, a natural action, as it cannot be done without thought, or strength, to execute what we design: These are the gifts of providence, and, in this respect, God concurs to the action. Thus *Joab* could not have killed *Abner*, or *Amasa*, if he had not had a natural power to use the instrument, with which he did it: This was from God; but the malice, that prompted him to abuse these gifts of providence, and his hypocritical subtilty, and that dissimu-

^e Exod. iv. 21.^f Deut. ii. 30.^g 2 Sam. xvi. 10.^h Gen. xlv. 8.ⁱ 1 Kings xxii. 23.

lation,

lation, or disguise of friendship, which gave him an opportunity to execute his bloody design, was from the wickedness of his own heart.

Thus having consider'd, that the providence of God may be conversant about that which is natural in a sinful action, without reflecting dishonour on him, as the author of sin; we shall now proceed to consider, in what manner 'tis conversant about such actions, by which we may better understand the sense of those scriptures, which were but now refer'd to; and, I hope, nothing therein will be accounted derogatory to the divine glory, when we consider,

1. That the providence of God may be conversant, in an objective way, about those actions to which sin is annex'd, without his being the author, or approver of it. Sin would not be committed, in many instances, if there were not some objects presented, which give occasion thereunto: The object that presents it self may be from God, when the sin, which is occasioned thereby, is from the corruption of our nature: Thus *Joseph's* brethren would not have thought of killing, or selling him into *Egypt*, at least, when they did, if he had not obey'd his father's command, in going to deliver his message, and see how it fared with them: Providence order'd his going to enquire of their welfare, and hereby the object was presented to them, which their own corrupt nature inclined them to abuse; so that, as soon as they saw him, they enter'd into a conspiracy against him. In the former of these respects, in which the providence of God was thus objectively conversant about this action, God is said to have sent *Joseph* into *Egypt*, though every circumstance, that was vile and sinful therein, was from themselves.

Again, in the instance before mention'd, of *Shimei's* cursing *David*, providence was conversant about this action, so far, as it order'd that *David* should come by at that time when *Shimei* was there, otherwise he would not have curs'd him; and when 'tis said, in the scripture but now mention'd, *The Lord said to Shimei, Curse David*, the meaning is this, the Lord hath brought me into so low a condition, that the vilest persons, who, before this time, were afraid to open their mouths against me, now take occasion to give vent to their malicious reproaches, as *Shimei* did; the providence

of God was conversant about this action, in an objective way. Now, what it is so conversant about, that, according to the scripture-mode of speaking, God is said to do; as when the man-slayer killed one, through inadvertency, who was presented as an object to him, God is said hereby to *deliver him into his hand*^k; yet in all sinful actions, God's presenting the object, does not render him the author of that sin, which is to be ascribed to the corruption of nature, that took occasion to exert it self by the sight of it. This will farther appear, if we consider,

(1.) That such an object might have been presented, and the sinful action not have ensued hereupon: thus the *wedge of gold*, and the *Babylonish garment*, were no temptation to other *Israelites*, who saw them *among the spoils of Jericho*, as well as *Achan*, though they were so to him, through the covetousness of his own temper, and the corruption of his nature, that discover'd it self, and internally moved him to this sinful action.

(2.) Such objects are not presented by providence, as designing hereby to ensnare, or draw persons to sin, though God knows that they will take occasion to sin thereby; but there are other ends of their being presented, which may be illustrated by a particular instance. God knows, that if the gospel be preached, some will take occasion to reproach it: He orders, notwithstanding, that it shall be preached; not that men might take occasion to do this, but that those, whom he has ordain'd to eternal life, might be converted by it. So our Saviour appear'd publicly at the feast of the passover, though he knew that the *Jews* would put him to death; the end of his going to *Jerusalem* was not that he might draw forth their corruption, but that he might finish the work, which he came into the world about: He was, at that time, engaged in his Father's work, but they perform'd that which they were prompted to do, by satan and their own wicked hearts.

2. When the providence of God is said to be conversant about sin, it is in suffering, or permitting it, not in suggesting, or tempting to it; for no one ought to say, as the Apostle *James* expresses it, *When he is tempted, that he is tempted of God; for God cannot tempt any man*; but, when he is tempted, *he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed*^l. But, so far as the providence of God denies restraining grace, from whence corrupt nature takes

^k Exod. xxi. 13.

^l James i. 13, 14.

298 Sin over-ruled by GOD, for his Glory, and his People's Good.

occasion to break forth, it is conversant about sin occasionally, not effectively; as when the banks, or flood-gates, that keep the waters within their due bounds, are broken down, by the owner thereof, who does not think fit to repair them, the waters will, according to the course of nature, overflow the country; or if the hedge, or inclosure, that secures the standing corn, be taken away, the beasts, by a propensity of nature, will tread it down, and devour it; so if that which would have a tendency to restrain, or prevent sin, be taken away, it will be committed; and the providence of God may do this, either in a way of sovereignty, or as a punishment for former sins committed, without being charg'd as the author of sin. 'Tis not the same, in this case, as when men do not prevent sin in others, when it is in their power to do it, since they are under an obligation hereunto: But God is under no obligation to extend this privilege unto sinful men; and sometimes he suffers that wrath, which he will not restrain, to break forth, as having a design, some way or other, to glorify himself thereby; as the Psalmist says, *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain*^m.

3. The providence of God may be said to be concern'd about sin, in over-ruling it for his own glory, and his people's good; in the former instances, it discovers it self, before the sin was committed; but, in this, it is consequent thereunto. This is a wonderful instance of his wisdom, in that, since the sinner obstinately resolves to rebel against him, this shall not tend to lessen, but illustrate some of his perfections: Thus he over-ruled the wicked action of *Joseph's* brethren, in their selling him into *Egypt*, to preserve their lives, in the time of famine; accordingly he says, *God has sent me before you to preserve life*ⁿ. And the vilest action that ever was committed in the world, namely, the crucifying the Lord of glory, was over-ruled, for the saving his people from their sins; and sometimes we read of God's punishing the obstinacy and rebellion of men, by giving courage and success to their enemies against them: Thus *Nebuchadnezzar's* success in arms against the *Jews*, was order'd by the providence of God, to punish their idolatry; first, by carrying the greatest part of them captive, and then, when pursuing those, who, contrary to God's order, fled into

Egypt, by destroying, or carrying them captive likewise; and, in doing this, he is called *God's servant*^o, not as though he had any religious regard to the honour and command of God herein; but his design was only to enlarge his dominions, by depriving others of their natural rights; yet God over-ruled this, for the setting forth the glory of his vindictive justice, against a sinful people. And *Cyrus*, on the other hand, was raised up to be *Israel's* deliverer from captivity: His success in war, which God designed should be subservient thereunto, is stiled, *His girding him*^p; and God promises, that he would *loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates*: And all this was done with a design that he should give liberty to his people; though *Cyrus* had no more religion, nor real regard to the interest of God in the world, than other kings, who design little else but the satisfying their own ambition; for it is expressly said, *Thou hast not known me*. God did not approve of that corruption, which might give the first occasion to the war, or that injustice that might appear in it: but, notwithstanding, he over-ruled it, to answer the ends of his own glory.

In considering the over-ruling providence of God, in order to the bringing about the ends designed, let it be farther observ'd; that there are some things which seem to have a more direct tendency thereunto, agreeably to the nature of those second causes, which he makes use of, whereby he gives us occasion to expect the event that will ensue: and, on the other hand, he sometimes brings about some great and valuable ends by those means, which, at first view, have no apparent tendency thereunto; but they are over-ruled without, or contrary to the design of second causes, wherein the admirable wisdom of providence discovers it self: Thus those things, which, in all appearance, seem to threaten our ruin, are order'd to subserve our future happiness, though, at present, altogether unexpected. When there was such a dark gloom cast on the world, by the first entrance of sin into it, who would have thought that this should be over-ruled by providence, to give occasion to the display of those divine perfections, which are glorified in the work of our redemption? I do not, indeed, like the expression of an ancient writer, who calls it, *Happy sin!* that gave occasion to man's

^m Psal. lxxvi. 10.

ⁿ Gen. xlv. 5.

^o Jer. xliii. 10.

^p Isai. xlv. 1, 5.

salvation; but I would rather say, How admirable was the providence of God, which over-ruled the vilest action to answer so great an end, and brought so much good out of that, which, in it self, was so great an evil!

We might here give some particular instances of the dispensations of providence, by which God brings good out of evil, in considering those lengths which he hath suffer'd some men to run in sin, whom he designed, notwithstanding, effectually to call and save; of which the Apostle *Paul* was a very remarkable instance, who considers this as an expedient, whereby God designed to *shew forth all long-suffering, as a pattern to them, that should hereafter believe on Christ to life eternal*; and that men might take encouragement, from hence, to conclude, that *Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners*^a. And the injurious treatment which God's people have met with from their enemies, has sometimes been over-ruled for their good: Thus *Ishmael's* mocking, or, as the Apostle calls it, *persecuting* Isaac; and, as is more than probable, not only reproaching him, but the religion which he profess'd, was over-ruled, by providence, for *Isaac's* good, when *Ishmael* was separated from him, which set him out of danger of being led aside by his bad example, as well as deliver'd him from that uneasiness, which his opposition to him would have occasion'd; and it was most agreeable to his future circumstances, whom God designed, not only to be the heir of the family, but the propagator of religion in it.

Again, *Pharaoh's* cruelty, and the methods used to prevent the increasing of the children of *Israel* in *Egypt*, was over-ruled by the providence of God, so that they seem'd, after this, to be the more immediate care thereof; and it is particularly remark'd, in scripture, as an instance of the kind hand of providence towards them, that *the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied, and grew*^b.

Again, the inhuman and barbarous cruelty of *Simeon* and *Levi*, in slaying the *Shechemites*^c, brought on them a curse; and accordingly their father pronounced it, and tells them, that *God would divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*^d, which, in particular, had its accomplishment in *Levi's* having no distinct inheri-

tance, except those cities that were appointed to them, out of every tribe; but this dividing and scattering them throughout the whole country, was over-ruled by the providence of God, for the good of his people in general; so that this tribe, which God had ordain'd, *to teach Jacob his judgments, and Israel his law*^e, might, through the nearness of their habitation, be conveniently situated among them to answer that end.

We might farther observe, that *Saul's* unreasonable jealousy and fury, with which he persecuted *David*, was over-ruled, by providence, for his good; as, in his exile, he had a greater degree of communion with God, than at other times, and, as is more than probable, was inspired to pen the greater number of his *Psalms*, and was, as it were, train'd up for the crown in this school of affliction, and so more fitted to govern *Israel*, when God designed to put it on his head.

To this let me add one instance more, and that is, God's suffering the persecuting rage of the *Jews* to vent it self against the Apostles, when the gospel was first preached by them, which was over-ruled by providence for their scattering, and this for the farther spread thereof, wherever they came; and the Apostle *Paul* observes, that *his bonds in Christ were not only manifest, in all the palace, and in all other places*, but they were made conducive to the *furtherance of the gospel*^f. And as for that contention that was between him and *Barnabas*, at another time, in which each of them shewed that they were but men, subject to like passions and infirmities with others, this seems to have been occasioned by a small and inconsiderable circumstance, yet it rose to such an height, that *they departed one from the other*^g. Each seem'd to be over-much tenacious of his own humour; but providence suffer'd the corruption of these excellent men to discover it self, and their separation to ensue, that, by this means, their ministry might be render'd more extensive, and double service be done to the interest of Christ in different parts of the world.

We might descend to instances of later date, and consider how God suffer'd the church of *Rome* to arrive to the greatest pitch of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry; and wholly to forsake the faith of the gospel, so as to establish the doctrine

^a 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

^b Exod. i. 12.

^c Gen. xxxiv. 25.

^d Gen. xlix. 7.

^e Deut. xxxiii. 10.

^f Phil. i. 12, 13.

^g Acts xv. 36—40.

300 *Objections against the Providence of God answer'd.*

of merit, and human satisfactions; and its leaders to be so profanely absurd, as to expose pardons and indulgencies to publick sale; this providence over-ruled, for the bringing about the *glorious Reformation in Germany*. And if it be added, that pride, lust, and covetousness, paved the way for it here in *England*, this is no blemish to the Reformation, as the Papists pretend, but a display of the over-ruling providence of God, that brought it about by this means.

I might enlarge on this subject, in considering the providence of God as bringing about wonderful and unexpected changes in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations, remarkably bringing down some who made the greatest figure in the world, and putting a glory on others raised up out of their ruins; and how all political affairs have been render'd subservient to answer the ends of the divine glory, with respect to the church in the world, and the deliverances which God has wrought in various ages for it, when it was, in all appearance, upon the brink of ruin, of which we have not only many instances, in scripture, but almost every age of the world has given us undeniable proofs of this matter. We might also consider the methods which God has often taken in bringing about his people's deliverance, when, to an eye of reason, it seem'd almost impossible, and that, either by dispiriting their enemies, or removing them out of the way, as the Psalmist expresses himself, *The stout-hearted are spoiled; they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands*²; or else by finding them some other work to do for their own safety and defence: Thus when *Saul* was pursuing *David*, in the wilderness of *Maon*, and had compass'd him, and his men round about to take them, there came a messenger to him, saying, *Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land*³. And sometimes he softens their spirits, by a secret and immediate touch of providence working a change in their natural temper and disposition: Thus he provided for *Jacob's* escape, from that death that was designed by his brother *Esau*. And, if God intends that they shall fall by the hand of their persecutors, he gives them courage and resolution, together with the exercise of all those graces, which are necessary to support them under, and carry

them through the difficulties that they are to undergo. But these things are so largely insisted on, by those who have writ professedly on the doctrine of providence^b, that more need not be added on this subject. I shall therefore only consider an objection, or two, that is generally brought against it, by those who pretend to acknowledge that there is a God, but deny his providence.

Object. 1. It is objected against the concern of the providence of God, with respect to the smallest things in this world, that they are unworthy of his notice, below his care, and therefore not the objects thereof.

Ans. If it was not unbecoming his power, to bring the smallest things into being, or to preserve them from sinking into nothing, then they cannot be excluded from being the objects of his providence. If we consider the whole frame of nature; it cannot be denied, but that some things have a tendency to answer the general design of providence, in a more eminent degree than others, and there are many things, the use whereof cannot be particularly assigned by us, otherwise than as they contain a small part of the frame of nature: But to say, that any part thereof is altogether useless, or excluded from being the object of providence, is a reflection on God, as the God of nature. And therefore we must conclude, that all things are, some way or other, subject to his providence; and that this is so far from being a dishonour to him, that it redounds to his glory.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, by those who are disposed to cavil at, and find fault with the divine dispensations; that they are not just and equal, because we oftentimes see the righteous afflicted, and the wicked prosper in the world, which is to reproach, if not wholly to deny the doctrine of providence. This is not only done by wicked men, but believers themselves have sometimes been under a temptation, through the prevalency of corrupt nature, to bring their objections against the equity of providence: thus the Psalmist says; *But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipt. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither*

² Psal. lxxvi. 5.

³ 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27.

^b See Charnock, Flavell, Dr. Collings, on Providence.

are they plagued like other men^c. These are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches: But as for himself, he says, *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued and chasten'd every morning^d*; and the prophet *Jeremiah*, when pleading with God concerning his judgments, though he owns, in general, that he was righteous, yet, says he, *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins^e*. He could hardly reconcile the general Idea which he had of God's justice, with the seeming inequality of the dispensations of his providence; so the prophet *Habakkuk*, tho' he owns that God was of purer eyes than to behold evil, and that he cannot look upon iniquity, yet he seems to complain, in the following words, *Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he^f?* And *Job* seems to speak very unbecomingly, when he says, *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress? that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands? and shine upon the counsel of the wicked^g?* So that, as the wicked boldly deny a providence, or, at least, reproach it; others, of a far better character, have, through the prevalency of their unbelief, seemed to detract from the glory thereof.

Ans. To this it may be reply'd, in general, in the Apostle's words, *Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God^h?* Is there no deference to be paid to his sovereignty, who has a right to do what he will with his own? Is his justice to be impeach'd, and try'd at our bar? Or his wisdom to be measured by our short-sighted discerning of things, who cannot see the end from the beginning of his dispensations? It is true, good men have been sometimes tempted to question the equity of the distributions of providence, as in the instances but now mention'd; unless we suppose, that the prophets *Habakkuk*, *Jeremiah*, and *Job*, rather speak the sense of the world, than their own sentiments of things, and desire that God would clear up some dark providences, that wicked men might not bring their objections against them; but

it may be doubted, whether this be the sense of those scriptures or no. And as for the Psalmist, in the other scripture, 'tis plain, that he expresses the weakness of his own faith, which was sometimes almost over-set; but, at other times, God condescends to resolve his doubts, and bring him into a better frame, as appears by some following Verses. But, that we may give a more particular reply to this objection, let it be consider'd,

1. That the unequal distribution of things is so far from being a disparagement to any government, that it eminently sets forth the beauty, wisdom, and excellency thereof, and is, in some respects, necessary. As it is not fit that every subject should be advanced to the same honour, or that the favour of a prince should be dispensed alike to all; so it sets forth the beauty of providence, as God is the Governor of the world, that some should more eminently appear to be the objects of his favour than others.

2. The wicked, whose condition is supposed, by those who bring this objection, to be more happy than that of the righteous, will not appear, if things were duly weighed, to be so happy, as they are pretended to be, if we consider the evils that they are exposed to at present, some of which are the immediate result and consequence of sin; whereby they are, as it were, tortured and distracted with contrary lusts and passions, which militate against the dictates of human nature, and render the pleasures of sin less desirable in themselves: But, when we consider those tormenting reflections, which they sometimes have, after the commission thereof, these are altogether inconsistent with peace, or happiness, much more if we consider the end thereof, as it leads to everlasting destruction: thus 'tis said, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own waysⁱ*. Therefore the good man would not change conditions with him, how destitute soever he may be of those riches, honours, or sensual pleasures, which the other reckons his portion; *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked^k*.

3. As for the good man, who is supposed to be in an afflicted condition in this life, we are not, from thence, to conclude him, in all respects, unhappy,

^c Psal. lxxiii. 2—5.
^h Rom. ix. 20.

^d Ver. 12—14.
ⁱ Prov. xiv. 13, 14.

^e Jer. xix. 1, 2.
^k Psal. xxxvii. 16.

^f Hab. i. 13.

^g Job x. 3.

for we are to judge of his state by the end thereof. He that looks upon *Lazarus*, as full of sores, and destitute of many of the conveniences of life, may reckon him unhappy at present, when compared with the condition of the *rich man*, who is represented in the parable, as *cloathed with purple, and fine linnen, and faring sumptuously every day*: But if we consider him, when leaving the world, as *carried by angels into Abraham's bosom*, and the other plunged into an abyss of misery; no one will see reason to charge the providence of God with any neglect of him, or conclude him to be really miserable, because of his condition in this present life.

Moreover, if we consider the righteous in his most disadvantageous circumstances, as to what respects his outward condition, we must, notwithstanding, regard him, as an object of divine love, and made partaker of those graces, and inward comforts, which are more than a balance for all his outward troubles; and therefore we may say of him, as the Apostle does of himself, though he be *unknown*, that is, obscure, and, as it were, disowned by the world, yet he is *well known*, that is, approved and beloved of God; does he live an afflicted and *dying* life? yet he has a better *life*, that is maintain'd by him: Is he *chastened*? yet he is *not killed*: Is he *sorrowful*? yet he always *rejoiceth*: Is he *poor*? yet he *maketh many rich*: Has he *nothing*, as to outward things? yet he *possesseth all things*, as he is an heir of eternal life^k.

QUEST. XIX. *What is God's providence towards the angels?*

ANSW. God, by his providence, permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory, and established the rest in holiness and happiness; employing them all at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice.

IT was observed, in a foregoing *Answer*, that God created all the angels holy; but, in this, some of

them are described as fallen, while the rest retained their first integrity, and the providence of God is consider'd, as conversant about this matter, in different respects. Accordingly it is said,

I. That God, by his providence, permitted some of the angels to fall. This appears, by the event, because there are some wicked and impure spirits, sunk down into the depths of misery, from that state in which they were created, as the consequence of their rebellion against God.

And inasmuch as it is observed, that it was only a part of the angels that fell, we may infer from thence; that the dispensation of providence, towards the angels, was different from that which mankind was subject to, when first created, in that one of them was not constituted the head and representative of the rest, in whom they were all to stand or fall; but the happiness, or misery, of every one of them was to be the result of his own personal conduct. As their persisting in obedience to God was necessary to their establishment in holiness and happiness, so the least instance of rebellion against him, would bring inevitable ruin upon them. Now that which is observed, concerning a part of them, is, that they fell into sin and damnation: thus the Apostle says, in 2 Pet. ii. 4. *God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.*

Their sin, or fall, was wilful; they commenced an open war against their Creator. Herein that enmity to God, and goodness, took its first rise, which has, ever since, been express'd by them, in various instances. Their sin appears to have been wilful, inasmuch as it was committed against the greatest degree of light, for all the angels are described as *excelling in knowledge*; and that subtilty, which is knowledge abused, and depraved with sin, that discovers it self in the fallen angels, argues, that their knowledge, before they fell, was very great, and therefore their rebellion was aggravated in proportion thereunto.

Moreover, they sinned without a tempter, especially those who first took up arms against God. Whether others, by their instigation, might not be induced to sin, we know

^k 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

GOD'S Providence, how conversant about the Fall of Angels. 303

not¹: But this is certain, that this rebellion was begun without a tempter; for there were no fallen creatures to present a temptation, nor any corruption in their natures, that internally drew them aside from God; and therefore their sin might well be stiled wilful.

And it may be observed, that the consequence hereof was their irrecoverable ruin. This respects the event of their fall; or that God designed, for ever, to leave them in that sinful and miserable state, into which they hereby brought themselves. He might, indeed, have recover'd them, as well as sinful man, had he pleased; but he has provided no mediator, no surety, to give satisfaction for them. The blessed Jesus is expressly said, not to have taken *their nature upon him*, thereby to signify that their condition was irretrievable, and their misery to be eternal.

Now it is farther observed, that the providence of God was conversant about their sin and fall, in the same sense in which, as has been before observed, it is conversant about sin in general; which is consistent with his holiness, as well as other perfections, namely, in *permitting, limiting, and ordering* it, and all their other sins, to his own glory.

1. He permitted it. To permit, is not to prevent a sin; and to say that God did not prevent their fall, is to assert a truth which none ever denied, or thought necessary to be proved.

2. It is farther observed, that the providence of God sets bounds and limits to their sin; as it does to the waves of the sea, when he says, *Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther*. How destructive to mankind would the malice of fallen angels be, were it not restrain'd? What would not satan attempt against us, had he an unlimited power? We have a remarkable instance of this in the case of *Job*. Satan first accused him as a time-serving hypocrite; a mercenary professor, one that did not *fear God for nought*, in *Chap. i. 9*. and how desirous was he that providence would give him up to his will, and take away the hedge of its safe protection? But God would not do this; nevertheless, so far as satan was suffer'd, he pour'd in a confluence of evils upon him, but could proceed no farther. First, he was suffer'd to plunder him of his substance, and take away his children, by a violent

death; but was so restrain'd, that, *upon himself*, he was not to *put forth his hand*, in *Ver. 12*. Afterwards, he was permitted to touch his person; and then we read of his smiting him with *sores boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown*, in *Chap. ii. 7*. But yet he was not suffer'd to take away his life. And, after this, the devil's malice still growing stronger against him, he endeavours to weaken his faith, to drive him into despair, and to rob him of that inward peace, which might have given some allay to his other troubles; but yet he is not suffer'd to destroy his graces, or hurry him into a total apostacy from God. What would not fallen angels attempt against mankind, were not their sin limited by the providence of God!

3. God's providence order'd, or over-ruled, the fall of angels, and all other sins consequent hereupon, to his own glory. Their power, indeed, is great, though limited, as appears by the innumerable instances of those, who have been not only tempted, but overthrown, and ruin'd by them. It may truly be said of them, that *they have cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by them*. Nevertheless, God over-rules this for his own glory; for from hence he takes occasion to try his people's graces, to give them an humbling sense of the corruption of their nature, and of their inability, to stand in the hour of temptation, without his immediate assistance, and puts them upon imploring help from him, with great importunity; as the Apostle *Paul* did^m, when the messenger of *satan* was suffer'd to buffet him, and God took occasion, at the same time, to display that *grace, which was sufficient for him*, and that *strength, that was made perfect in weakness*, and, in the end, to bruise *satan* under his feet, and to make him more than a conqueror over him.

Having thus consider'd some of the angels, as sinning and falling, it might farther be enquired; whether these all fell at once? And here I cannot but take notice of a very absurd and groundless conjecture of some of the *Fathers*, and others, who, of late, have been too much inclined to give into it, namely, that tho' some of them sinned from the beginning, and these were the occasion of the sin of our first parents, as all allow; yet, after this, others, who were appointed to minister

¹ Some think, that those expressions, which we find in scripture, that speak of the devil, and his angels, and the prince of devils, import as much; but this we pretend not to determine.

^m 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.

to men, were unfaithful in the discharge of their office, and became partners with them in sin; accordingly they understand that scripture, in which it is said, *The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose*^a, as though it were meant of angels^o; whereas nothing is intended thereby but some of the posterity of *Seth*, who were, before this, professors of the true religion.

There are, indeed, some, of late, who have given into this notion, and strain the sense of that text, in *Jude*, Ver. 6, 7. in which 'tis said, that *the angels, which kept not their first estate, &c. even as Sodom and Gomorrha, giving themselves over to fornication, are set forth, for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*; the meaning of which they suppose to be this; that, even as the *Sodomites* were guilty of fornication, and were destroy'd, by fire from heaven, for it, so some of the angels were sent down to hell for the same sin: But, 'tis plain, the Apostle does not here compare the *Angels* and the *Sodomites* together, as guilty of the same kind of sin, but as both are condemn'd to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, and are set forth as warnings to presumptuous sinners. Therefore nothing more need be added under this *Head*; 'tis enough to say, that this opinion is contrary to the spirituality of the nature of angels; though there are some ancient writers, who, to give countenance thereunto, have supposed that the angelic-spirits were either united to some bodies, or that they assumed them for this purpose; but this is equally absurd, and without any countenance from scripture. Thus concerning the providence of God, as exercised towards the angels that fell. We proceed,

II. To consider providence, as conver-

sant about the rest of the angels, who retained their integrity. Concerning these it is said,

I. That God established them in holiness and happiness. These two privileges are always connected together. It is not said, that they were brought into such a state, or, like man, recover'd out of a fallen state, for they are consider'd as sinless, or holy angels; nor is it supposed that their holiness was increased, since that would be inconsistent with its having been perfect before: That privilege therefore, which providence confer'd on them, was the confirming, or establishing them in that state, in which they were created; which bears some resemblance to that privilege, which man would have enjoy'd, had he retained his integrity, as he would not only have continued to be holy and happy, so long as he remained innocent; but he would have been so confirmed in it, that his fall would have been prevented: But of this, more in its proper place. The angels, I say, had something like this, which we call the grace of confirmation.

Some have enquired whether this was the result of their yielding perfect obedience for a time, while remaining in a state of probation, pursuant to some covenant, not much unlike that which God made with innocent man; and whether this privilege was the consequence of their fulfilling the condition thereof. But this is to enter too far into things out of our reach; nor is it much for our edification to determine it, tho' some have asserted, without proving it, while others have supposed them to have been confirm'd, when first created, and that herein there was an instance of discriminating grace among the angels; so that they, who fell, were left to the mutability of their wills, whereas they, who stood, had, at the same time, the grace of confirmation.

^a Gen. vi. 2.

^o This was the opinion of most of the *Fathers*, in the three first *Centuries* of the church, namely, *Justin Martyr*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Lactantius*, *Irenaeus*, *Cyprian*, and others. Some of them appear'd to have taken the hint thereof from some MS. of the LXX translation, which render'd the words in *Gen. vi. 2.* instead of the *sons of God*, the *angels saw the daughters of men*, &c. This translation being used by them, instead of the *Hebrew* text, which they did not well understand; though others took it from a spurious and fabulous writing, which they had in their hands, called, *Enoch*, or, *the prophecy of Enoch*, or rather, *Liber, περὶ ἐγγενέων, de Egregoriis*, a barbarous *Greek* word, used to signify *Angels*, and taken from the character given them of *Watchers*, in *Daniel*. Of this book, we have some fragments now remaining, in which there is such a ridiculous and fabulous account of this matter, as very much, herein exceeds the apocryphal history of *Tobit*. It gives an account of a conspiracy among the angels, relating to this matter; the manner of their entering into it, their names, the year of the world, and place in which this wickedness was committed, and other things, that are unworthy of a grave historian; and, the reckoning it among those writings, that are supposed to have a divine sanction, is little other than prophaneness and blasphemy. Some of the *Fathers*, who refer to this book, pretend it to be no other than apocryphal, and, had they counted it otherwise, all would have reckon'd it a burlesque upon scripture; therefore *Origen*, who, on other occasions, seems to pay too great a deference to it, when *Celsus* takes notice of it, as containing a banter on the Christian religion, he is, on that occasion, obliged to reply to him, that that book was not in great reputation in the church, *Vid. Orig. contra Celsum*, Lib. V. And *Jerom* reckons it among the apocryphal writings, *Vid. Hieronym. in Catal. Script. Eccles.* cap. 4. And *Augustin* calls it not only apocryphal, but, as it deserves, fabulous, *Vid. ejusd. de Civ. Dei*, Lib. XV. cap. 23.

I might here have been more particular, in considering what this privilege imports, and how it renders the fall of those who are confirmed impossible, and therefore it is a very considerable addition to their happiness: But since we shall have occasion to speak of the grace of confirmation, which man was given to expect in the first covenant, under a following *Answer*, and the privileges that would have attended it, had he stood, we shall add no more on that subject in this place; but proceed to prove, that the angels are established and confirmed in holiness and happiness.

This may, in some measure, be argued, from their being called *elect angels*^p. If *Election*, when applied to men, imports the purpose of God, to confer everlasting blessedness on those who are the objects thereof, and so not only implies that they shall be saved, but that their salvation shall be eternal; why may it not, when applied to angels, infer the eternity of their holiness and happiness, and consequently their being established therein?

Again, this may be also argued, from their coming with Christ, when he shall appear to judge the world; and the joining the saints and angels together in one assembly in heaven: therefore, if the happiness of the one be eternal, that of the other must be so likewise. It is also said, expressly of the angels, that *they always behold the face of God*. And, when we read of the destruction of the church's enemies, the angels are represented as observers of God's righteous judgments; and then it is added, that the punishment inflicted on those, who shall *drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, shall be eternal, and this eternal punishment will be *in the presence of the holy angels*^q. If therefore the duration of the holiness and happiness of the angels, be equal to that of the misery of God's implacable enemies, as both are said to be eternal, this evidently proves that the angels are established in holiness and happiness.

2. It is farther observed, that God employs all the angels, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice. This leads us to speak concerning the ministry of angels, which is either extraordinary, or ordinary. Most of the instances which we have thereof, especially in the Old Testament, were

performed in an extraordinary manner, and sometimes attended with their appearance in a human form, assumed for that purpose: This may be briefly consider'd; and then we shall enquire, whether, though their ministry be not visible, or attended with those circumstances, as it formerly was, there are not some other instances, in which the providence of God now employs them for the good of his church. As to the former of these, we read that God has sometimes sent them to supply his servants with necessary food, when destitute thereof, and there was no ordinary way for their procuring it: Thus an angel brought *a cake*, and *a cruse of water*, to *Elijah*, when he was on his journey to *Horeb, the mount of God*^r. And when *Abraham's* servant was travelling to *Mesopotamia*, to bring a wife from thence for *Isaac*, *Abraham* tells him, that *God would send his angel before him*^s, and so make his journey prosperous.

Again, the angels have sometimes been sent to defend God's people, and to assure them of safety, when exposed to danger: Thus, when *Jacob* was returning from *Laban* to his own country, and was apprehensive of the danger that he was exposed to, from the resentment of his brother *Esau*, 'tis said, that *the angels of God met him*; and, *when he saw them, he said, This is God's host*^t. And when the prophet *Elijah* was encompass'd about by the *Syrian* army, sent on purpose to take him, he was defended by an host of angels appearing under the emblem of *horses*, and *chariots of fire round about him*^u. Others, when persecuted, and, as it were, deliver'd over to death, have been preserved, as *Daniel* was, when cast into the *lion's den*, by the ministry of angels^v. Others have been released from their chains, and the prison doors open'd by them; as *Peter*, and the rest of the *Apostles* were^w.

Again, sometimes they have been employ'd to deliver messages, and give the prophets an extraordinary intimation of future events; as the angel *Gabriel* did to *Daniel*^x. And an angel was sent to *Zacharias*, to foretel the birth of his son, *John the Baptist*^y.

Moreover, the angels of God have sometimes been employ'd to give a check to his enemies, when they have attempted any thing against his church: Thus

^p 1 Tim. v. 21.

^q Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

^r 1 Kings xix. 5—8.

^s Gen. xxiv. 7.

^t Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.

^u 2 Kings vi. 15—17.

^x Dan. vi. 22.

^y Acts xii. 17. compared with Chap. v. 19.

^w Dan. viii. 16.

^a Luke i. 13.

the angel met *Balaam* in the way, when he was riding to seek enchantments against *Israel*, his way being *perverse before God*^b. And another angel was sent, as a minister of God's justice, in bringing the pestilence on *Israel*, for *David's* numbering the people, who appear'd *with his hand stretched out upon Jerusalem to destroy it*^c, and afterwards withdrew his hand, when God told him, *It is enough, and that it repented him of the evil*. And to this we may add, that the angels shall be employ'd, at last, in gathering together the elect, from the four winds, that they may appear before Christ's tribunal. These, and many other instances to the like purpose, are mentioned, in scripture, to set forth the extraordinary ministry of angels.

There are also other instances, in which, though miracles are ceased, the angels are employ'd to perform some works in the hand of providence for God's people: Thus there are some promises, which seem to be applied to the church in all ages, of blessings, which should be confer'd by their ministry; as when it is said, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*^d; which scripture, though it may have a particular reference to their ministry to our Saviour, yet it seems to be applicable also to his people; and that promise, *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*^e, is applicable to them in all ages, as well as that in which it is said, concerning the ministry of angels to infants, that *in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven*^f.

Moreover, the ministry of angels to dying saints, who are, according to what our Saviour says in the parable, *carried, by them, into Abraham's bosom*^g, is universally true of all saints. And it is expressly said, with a peculiar application to the gospel-dispensation, that the angels are *all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation*^h; so that though their ministry, as to many circumstances thereof, differ from what it was of old, there being nothing miraculous now attending it, as formerly there was; yet it remains an undoubted truth, that they are, and have been, in

all ages, made use of, by the providence of God, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice.

I shall conclude this *Head* with a few cautions relating to this matter, as this doctrine is not to be laid down without certain restrictions, or limitations; therefore,

1. We must take heed, notwithstanding what has been said concerning the ministry of angels, that we don't take occasion hereby to set aside the immediate influence, or concern of the providence of God, for his church; for whatever may be ascribed to angels, as second causes, our principal regard must be to him, whose ministers they are; neither are we to entertain the least thought, as though God had committed the government of the world, or the church, to them; which the Apostle expressly denies, when he says, *Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come*ⁱ; therefore,

2. The praise and glory of all their ministry is not to be ascribed to them, but to him, who makes use of them; nor are we to pretend, at all times, to determine, that this or that particular dispensation of providence is by the immediate hand of God, and another by the ministry of angels; since it is enough for us to say, that, though God does not need their assistance, yet he sometimes sets forth the sovereignty of his providence, and evinces his right to employ all his creatures at his pleasure, as well as gives an additional instance of his care of his churches, by employing them in extraordinary services for their good; though we cannot, at all times, distinguish between what is done by the immediate hand of God, and other things performed by their ministry.

3. Whatever we assert, concerning the ministry of angels, we must take heed that we do not regard them, as objects of divine worship, or exercise that dependence on, or give that glory to them, which is due to God alone. Nor are we to suppose, that God employs them in those works that are the effects of his supernatural or almighty power, in which he deals with the hearts of his people, in a way more immediately conducive to their conversion and salvation.

^b Numb. xxii. 32.
^g Luke xvi. 22.

^c 2 Sam. xxiv. 16.
^h Heb. i. 14.

^d Psal. xci. 11, 12.
ⁱ Heb. ii. 5.

^e Psal. xxxiv. 7.

^f Matt. xviii. 10.

Of the Providence of GOD towards Man in Innocency. 307

QUEST. XX. *What was the providence of God toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

ANSW. The providence of God toward man, in the estate wherein he was created, was, the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help, affording him communion with himself, instituting the sabbath, entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; of which, the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

IN this Answer, we have an account of the providence of God, as respecting the outward, and the spiritual, concerns of man.

I. As to what respects his outward estate, we have an account,

1. Of God's fixing the place of his abode, which was to be in paradise, a very large and most delightful garden, of God's own planting, an epitome of all the beauties of nature, which, as it were, presented to his view the whole world in miniature; so that herein he might, without travelling many miles, behold the most beautiful landskip which the world afforded, and partake of all the fruits, with which it was stored: The whole world, indeed, was given him for a possession; but this was, as it were, a store-house of its choicest fruits, and the peculiar seat of his residence.

We find the word *Paradise* used, in scripture, sometimes to signify a delightful garden, and sometimes it is taken, in a metaphorical sense, to signify *Heaven*^k; by which application thereof, we may conclude, that this earthly paradise, in which

man was placed, was a kind of type of the heavenly blessedness, which, had he retained his integrity, he would have been possessed of, and which they, who are saved by Christ, shall be brought to.

Here we may take notice of the conjectures of some ancient and modern writers concerning it, more especially as to what respects that part of the world wherein it was situate; and whether it is now in being, or to be found in any part of it, at this day. Many have given great scope to their wit and fancy about the situation of paradise, and some conjectures are so absurd, that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. As,

(1.) Some have thought that it was situate in some place, superior to, and remote from, this globe of the earth, in which we live; but they have not the least shadow of reason for this supposition, and nothing can be more contrary to the account we have thereof in scripture.

(2.) Others fancy, that there was really no such place, but that the whole account we have thereof, in *Gen. ii.* is allegorical; thus *Origen*, *Philo*, and some modern writers: But no one can justly suppose this, who duly weighs the historical account we have of it, in scripture, with that sobriety and impartiality that he ought; for, according to this method of reasoning, we may turn any thing into an allegory, and so never come to any determinate sense of scripture, but what the wild fancies of men suggest.

(3.) Others have supposed, that the whole world was one great garden, or paradise, and that when man was placed therein, it was so described, to signify the beauties of nature, before they were lost, by the curse consequent on sin: But this cannot be true, because God first made man, and then *planted this garden*, and afterwards *put him into it*^l; and, after the fall, he *drove him out of it*^m. But, passing by these groundless conjectures, something may be determined, with more certainty, concerning the situation thereof, and more agreeable to scripture; therefore,

(4.) It was situate in *Mesopotamia*, near *Babylon*, to the north-east of the land of *Canaan*. This appears,

1^o. From the country adjacent to it, which is called *Eden*, out of which *the river that water'd it* is said to proceedⁿ. This country was afterwards known by the same name, and is elsewhere reckon'd

^k Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 4. Rev. ii. 7.

^l Gen. ii. 8.

^m Gen. iii. 24.

ⁿ Gen. ii. 10.

among

308 *Of Paradise, Man's secular Employment in it, and Food.*

among those that the king of *Affyria* had conquered °.

2^{dly}. Two of the rivers, that proceeded from *Eden*, which water'd paradise, were well known in after-ages, viz. *Hiddekel*, or *Tigris*, and *Euphrates*, especially the latter, of which we often read in scripture; and 'tis certain they were in *Mesopotamia*; therefore the garden of *Eden* was there. And, as it was the finest plantation in the world, this was one of the most pleasant climates therein, not situate too far northward, so as to be frozen up in winter; nor too near the Equator south-ward, so as to be scorch'd with excessive heat in summer; this was the place of man's residence at first.

But if any are so curious in their enquiries, as to desire to know the particular spot of ground in which it was; that is not to be determined. For, though the place where paradise was, must be still in being, as much as any other part of the world; yet there are no remains of it, that can give any satisfaction to the curiosity of men, with relation thereunto; for 'tis certain, that it was soon destroy'd as a garden, partly by the flaming sword, or stream of fire, which was designed to guard the way of the tree of life, that man might no more come to it; and thereby to signify, that it ceased to be an ordinance for his faith, concerning the way in which eternal life was to be obtained. And it is more than probable, that this stream of fire, which is called a flaming sword, destroy'd, or burnt up, this garden; and, besides this, the curse of God, by which the earth brought forth bryars and thorns, affected this, as well as other parts of the world; so that, by reason thereof, and for want of culture, it soon lost its beauty, and so could not well be distinguished from the barren wilderness. And to this let me add, that since the flood, the face of the earth is so alter'd, that 'tis a vain thing for travellers to search for any traces thereof, or to pretend to determine, within a few miles, the place where it was.

Having consider'd the place of man's abode, to wit, paradise, we have,

2. An account of his secular employment therein. He was appointed to dress, or manure it; from whence we may take occasion to observe, that a secular employment is not inconsistent with perfect holiness, or a person's enjoying communion with God, and that blessedness which arises from it: But, on the other hand, it may be reckon'd an

advantage, inasmuch as it is a preservative against idleness, and those temptations that oftentimes attend it. Notwithstanding, though man was employ'd in this work, it was perform'd without that labour, fatigue, and uneasiness, which now attends it, or those disappointments, and perplexities, which men are now exposed to, whose secular callings are a relief against poverty, and a necessary means for their comfortable subsistence in the world, which, had not man fell, would not have been attended with those inconveniencies that now they are, as the consequence of that curse, which sin brought with it; as it is said, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread* P.

3. We have a farther account of the provision that providence made for man's subsistence; the great variety of fruits, which the earth produced, were given him for food, the tree of knowledge of good and evil only excepted. From whence we may observe, the difference between the condition of man in paradise, and that of the saints in heaven, in which the bodies of men shall be supported, without food, when changed and adapted to such a way of living, as is inconsistent with this present state; which seems to be the meaning of that expression of the Apostle, *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them* Q.

Here we may take occasion to enquire, whether the fruits of the earth were the only food which man lived on, not only before the fall, but in several following ages? or, whether flesh was eaten before the flood? It seems most agreeable to the dictates of nature, to suppose, that he would never have found out such an expedient, as killing the beasts, and eating their flesh, to subsist him, had he not received an express direction to do it from God, which render'd it a duty. And we have a particular intimation of this grant given to *Noah*, after the deluge, when God says, *Every moving thing that liveth*, namely, every clean beast, *shall be meat for you* R; from whence some conclude, that there was no flesh eaten before this; and that the distinction, which we read of, concerning clean and unclean beasts, which *Noah* brought with him into the ark, respected either such as were fit or unfit for sacrifice; or the clean beasts were such as God afterwards designed for food; and therefore there is a kind of *Prolepsis* in their being called clean at that time.

° Isai. xxxvii. 12.

P Gen. iii. 19.

Q 1 Cor. vi. 13.

R Gen. ix. 3.

Man's Food in Paradise, and Dominion over the Creatures. 309

The principal reason that induces some to suppose this, is, because we read, in the scripture but now mention'd, that when God directed *Noah*, and his posterity, to eat flesh, and consider'd this as a peculiar gift of providence, he said, *Even as the green herb have I given you all things, q. d. as when I created man at first, I gave him every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, that it should be to him for meat; but now have I given you all things*[†]; that is, have made a considerable addition to your food, by giving you a liberty to feed on flesh; where the manner of expression seems to intimate, that, in this respect, man's food differ'd from what it was before. This conjecture, for that is the most that I can call it, seems, to me, to have equal, if not greater, probability in it, than the contrary, which is the commonly received opinion relating hereunto; and, if it be true, then we may observe, if we compare the food, by which man subsisted, with the length of his life, in the first ages of the world, that the most simple diet is the most wholesome; when men become slaves to their appetites, and pamper themselves with variety of meats, they do, as it were, dig their own graves, and render their lives shorter, than they would be, according to the common course of nature.

If it be objected to this, that man's not feeding on flesh, was such a diminution of his happiness, that it seems inconsistent with a state of innocency. To this it may be answer'd, that for man to feed on what the earth produced, was no mortification, or unhappiness, to him; especially if it were, by a peculiar blessing of providence, adapted to, as well as designed for his nourishment, as being his only food; in which case, none of those consequences would ensue, which would now attend a person's being wholly confined thereto. If this way of living was so far from destroying, or weakening the constitution of men, that it tended, by the peculiar blessing of God, not only to nourish, but to maintain health, and was medicinal, as well as nourishing, and so conducive to long life; and if the fruits of the earth, before that alteration, which they might probably sustain by the deluge, or, at least, before the curse of God was brought upon the earth by man's sin, differ'd vastly from what they now

are, both as to the pleasantness of their taste, and their virtue to nourish; if these things are supposed, it cannot be reckon'd any degree of unhappiness, tho' man, at this time, might have no other food, but what the earth produced: But this I reckon among the number of those probable conjectures, concerning which it is not very material to determine, whether they are true or false.

4. God gave man dominion over all creatures in this world, or, as it is express'd, he *put them under his feet*[‡], which not only argues a superiority of nature, but a propriety in, and liberty to use them, to the glory of God, and his own advantage. No creature was in it self a snare to him, or a necessary occasion of sin; for as the creature at first, to use the Apostle's phrase, was not liable to *the bondage of corruption*, so it was not *subject to vanity*[§], by any inclination that he had in his nature to abuse it. And as for those creatures, which are now formidable to man, as the lion, the tyger, &c. these, as 'tis more than probable, had not that fierceness in their nature, before the fall of man, and the curse consequent thereupon, so that our first parents could make as much use of them, and had them as much under their command, as we have the tamest creatures. And it is not improbable, that they did not prey upon, and devour one another, as now they do, since providence provided the produce of the earth *for their food*^{*}, and therefore, by a natural instinct, they sought it only from thence; so that the beasts devouring one another, as well as their being injurious to man, is a standing mark of the curse of God, which was consequent on sin.

We read of a time in which the church is given to expect, that *the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat; they shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all God's holy mountain*[¶]; which, if it shall be literally accomplished, is an intimation that it was so at first, as it contains a prediction of the restoring of this part of nature, in some respects, to its first estate. But, supposing it only to be a metaphorical description of the church's happy state in future ages; the prophet's using this metaphor, argues the possibility of the thing's being literally true, and that it is a consequence of man's fallen state that it is not so now, therefore 'tis probable, that it was otherwise

[†] Gen. i. 29.

[‡] Psal. viii. 6.

[§] Rom. viii. 20, 21.

^{*} Gen. i. 30.

[¶] Isai. lxi. 25.

310 *Providence concerned about Man's Spiritual Affairs.*

at first. Such conjectures as these may be excused, if we don't pretend them to be articles of faith, nor think it worth our while to contend with those who deny them.

5. 'Tis farther observed, that God ordained marriage for man's help, and that not only in what concerns the conveniences of this life; but as a means to promote his spiritual welfare, as such a nearness of relation lays the strongest obligations to it; and also that the world might be increased, without any sinful expedient conducive thereunto; and herein there was a standing precedent to be observed by mankind, in all succeeding ages, that hereby the unlawfulness of polygamy, and other violations of the *seventh Commandment*, might evidently appear^{*}.

II. We proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about man's spiritual concerns, and that in three respects, namely, in granting him communion with himself, in instituting the sabbath, and entering into a covenant of life with him.

1. Man, in the estate in which he was created, was favour'd with communion with God: This supposes a state of friendship, and is opposed to estrangement, separation, or alienation from him; and, as the result hereof,

(1.) God was pleased to manifest his glory to him, and that not only in an objective way, or barely by giving him a conviction, that he is a God of infinite perfection, which a person may have, who is destitute of communion with him: but he display'd his perfections in such a manner to him, so as to let him see his interest therein, and that, as long as he retain'd his integrity, they were engaged to make him happy.

(2.) This communion was attended with access to God, without fear, and a great delight in his presence; for man, being without guilt, was not afraid to draw nigh to God; and, being without spot, as made after his image, he had no shame, or confusion of face, when standing before him, as a holy, sin-hating God.

(3.) It consisted in his being made partaker of those divine influences, whereby he was excited to put forth acts of holy obedience to, and love and delight in him, which were a spring and fountain of spiritual joy.

Nevertheless, though this communion was perfect in its kind, as agreeable to the state in which he was at first, yet it was not so perfect, as to degree, as it would have been, had he continued in his integrity, till he was possess'd of those blessings, which would have been the consequence thereof; for then the soul would have been more enlarged, and made receptive of greater degrees of communion, which he would have enjoy'd in heaven. He was, indeed, at first, in a holy and happy state, yet he was not in heaven, and, though he enjoy'd God, it was in ordinances, and not in an immediate way; and accordingly it was necessary for him constantly to address himself to him, for the maintainance of that spiritual life, which he had received, together with his being; and this was not inconsistent with a state of innocency, any more than the maintainance of our natural lives, by the use of proper food, is inconsistent with health, or argues an infirm, or sickly constitution, or any need of medicine to recover it; yet our lives would be more confirm'd, and, if we may so express it, less precarious, if God had ordain'd that they should have been supported without these means.

This may serve to illustrate the difference that there is between the happiness that the saints enjoy, in God's immediate presence in heaven, and that which is expected, as the result of our daily access to him, in ordinances, wherein we hope for some farther degree of communion with him; the former of these man would have attained to, had he stood; the latter contain'd in it, that state in which he was in innocency: But inasmuch as there can be no communion with God, but what has a proportionable degree of delight and pleasure attending it, this our first parents may be said to have experienced, which contributed to the happiness of that state in which they were, though this joy was not so compleat, as that is which they are possess'd of, who have not only an assurance of the impossibility of losing that communion, which they have with God at present, but are arrived to a state of perfect blessedness.

2. God sanctified and instituted the sabbath for man's more immediate access to him, and, that he might express his gratitude for the blessings he was made partaker of, and might have a recess from that secular employment, which, as was

^{*} See Vol. II. Quest. CXXXIX.

before

The Sabbath instituted, and Covenant established. 311

before observed, he was engaged in. This was therefore a great privilege; and, indeed, the sabbath was a pledge, or shadow, of an everlasting sabbath, which he would have enjoy'd in heaven, had he not forfeited, and lost it, by his fall. But we shall have occasion to speak more particularly to this *Head* under the *fourth Commandment*^a; and therefore all that we shall add, at present, is, that the sabbath was instituted as a day of rest for man, even while he remained in a state of innocency. This appears from its being blessed and sanctified, upon the occasion of God's resting from his work of creation; therefore it was, at that time, set apart to be observed by him.

Object. 1. It is objected, that it might then be sanctified with this view, that man should observe it after his fall, or, in particular, at that time when the observation of it was enjoin'd.

Answer. To this it may be replied, that there never was any ordinance instituted, but what was designed to be observed by man, immediately after the institution thereof. Now the sanctification of the sabbath imports as much as its institution, or setting apart for a holy use; therefore we cannot but suppose, that God design'd that it should be observed by man in innocency.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, that it was inconsistent with the happy state, in which man was created, for God to appoint a day of rest for him, to be then observed; for rest supposes labour, and therefore is more agreeable to that state into which he brought himself by sin, when, by the sweat of his brow, he was to eat bread.

Answer. Though, 'tis true, man, in innocency, was not exposed to that uneasiness and fatigue that attended his employment after his fall, neither was the work he was engaged in a burthen to him, so as that he needed a day of rest to give him ease, in that respect; yet a cessation from a secular employment, attended with a more immediate access to God in his holy institutions, wherein he might hope for a greater degree of communion with him, was not inconsistent with that degree of holiness and happiness, in which he was created, which, as was before observed, was short of the heavenly blessedness; so that, though heaven is a state, in which the saints enjoy an everlasting sabbath, it does not follow that man, how happy forever he was in paradise, was so

far favour'd therein, as that a day of rest was inconsistent with that state.

3. We shall proceed to enquire how the providence of God had a more immediate reference to the spiritual or eternal happiness of man, in that he enter'd into a covenant of life with him, under which *Head* we are to consider the personal concerns of our first parents therein.

(1.) The dispensation they were under, was that of a covenant. This is allowed by most, who acknowledge the imputation of *Adam's* sin, and the universal corruption of nature, as consequent thereupon. And some call it, a *Covenant of Innocency*, inasmuch as it was made with man while he was in a state of innocency; others call it, a *Covenant of Works*, because perfect obedience was enjoin'd, as the condition of it, and so it is opposed to the covenant of grace, as there was no provision made therein for any display of grace, as there is in that covenant which we are now under; but, in this *Answer*, it is called the *Covenant of Life*, as having respect to the blessings promised therein.

It may seem indifferent to some, whether it ought to be termed a covenant, or a law of innocency; and, indeed, we would not contend about the use of a word, if many did not design, by what they say, concerning its being a law, and not properly a covenant, to prepare the way for the denial of the imputation of *Adam's* sin; or did not, at the same time, consider him as no other than the natural head of his posterity, which, if it were to be allowed, would effectually overthrow the doctrine of original sin, as contained in some following *Answers*. Therefore we must endeavour to prove, that man was not barely under a law, but a covenant of works; and, that we may proceed with more clearness, we shall premise some things, in general, concerning the difference between a law and a covenant.

A law is the revealed will of a sovereign, in which a debt of obedience is demanded, and a punishment threaten'd, in proportion to the nature of the offence, in case of disobedience. And here we must consider, that as a subject is bound to obey a law; so he cannot justly be deprived of that which he has a natural right to, but in case of disobedience; therefore obedience to a law gives him a right to impunity, but nothing more than this; whereas a covenant gives a person a

right,

^a See Vol. II. Quest. CXVI.

right, upon his fulfilling the conditions thereof, to all those privileges, which are stipulated, or promised therein. This may be illustrated, by considering it as applied to human forms of government, in which it is supposed that every subject is possessed of some things, which he has a natural or political right to, which he cannot justly be deprived of, unless he forfeit them by violating the law, which, as a subject, he was obliged to obey; therefore, though his obedience give him a right to impunity, or to the undisturbed possession of his life and estate, yet this does not entitle him to any privilege, which he had no natural right to. A King is not obliged to advance a subject to great honours, because he has not forfeited his life and estate by rebellion; but in case he had promised him, as an act of favour, that he would confer such honours upon him, upon condition of his yielding obedience in some particular instances, then he would have a right to them, not as yielding obedience to a law, but as fulfilling the conditions of a covenant.

This may be farther illustrated, by considering the case of *Mephibosheth*: He had a natural and legal right to his life and estate, which descended to him from his father *Jonathan*, because he behaved himself peaceably, and had not rebelled against *David*; but this did not entitle him to those special favours which *David* confer'd upon him, such as *eating bread at his table continually*^b; for those were the result of a covenant between *David* and *Jonathan*; in which *David* promised, that he would shew kindness to his house after him. Now, to apply this to our present case, if we consider our first parents only as under a law, their perfect obedience to it, 'tis true, would have given them a right to impunity, since punishment supposes a crime; therefore God could not, consistently with his perfections, have punished them, had they not rebelled against him. I don't say, that God could not, in consistency with his perfections, have taken away the blessings that he confer'd upon them, as creatures, in a way of sovereignty, but this he could not do as a judge; so that man would have been entirely exempted from punishment, as long as he had stood: But this would not, in the least, have entitl'd him to any super-added happiness, unless there had been a promise made, which gave him ground to expect

it, in case he yielded obedience; and, if there were, then that dispensation, which before contained the form of a law, having this circumstance added to it, would afterwards contain the form of a covenant, and so give him a right to that super-added happiness promised therein, according to the tenor of that covenant. Therefore, if we can prove (which we shall endeavour to do, before we dismiss this subject) not only that man was obliged to yield perfect obedience, as being under a law; but that he was given to expect a super-added happiness, consisting either in the grace of confirmation in his present state, or the heavenly blessedness; then 'twill follow, that he would have had a right to it, in case of yielding that obedience, according to the tenor of this dispensation, as containing in it the nature of a covenant.

This I apprehend to be the just difference between a law and a covenant, as applicable to this present argument, and consequently must conclude, that the dispensation man was under, contained both the *Ideas* of a law and a covenant: His relation to God, as a creature, obliged him to yield perfect obedience to the divine will, as containing the form of a law; and this perfect obedience, had it been perform'd, would have given him a right to the heavenly blessedness, by virtue of that promise, which God was pleased to give to man in this dispensation, as it contain'd in it the nature of a covenant. And this will farther appear, when we consider,

(2.) The blessing promised in this covenant, namely, life. This, in scripture, is used sometimes to signify temporal, and, at other times, spiritual and eternal blessings: We have both these senses joined together in the Apostle's words, where we read of *the life that now is, and that which is to come*^c. Moreover, sometimes *life* and *blessing*, or blessedness, are put together, and opposed to death, as containing in it all the ingredients of evil^d; in which scripture, when *Moses* exhorts them *to choose life*, he doth not barely intend a natural life, or outward blessings, for these there is no one but chooses, whereas many are hardly persuaded to make choice of spiritual life.

In this *Head* we are upon, we consider life, as including in it both spiritual and eternal blessedness; so it is to be understood, when our Saviour says, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which*

^b 2 Sam. ix. 13.^c 1 Tim. iv. 8.^d Deut. xxx. 19.

Arguments to prove that Adam was under a Covenant. 313

leadeth unto life^e; and elsewhere, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*^f. We must therefore conclude, that *Adam* having such a promise as this made to him, upon condition of perfect obedience, he was given to expect some privileges, which he was not then possessed of, which included in them the enjoyment of the heavenly blessedness; therefore this dispensation, that he was under, may well be called a covenant of life.

But, since this is so necessary a subject to be insisted on, we shall offer some arguments to prove it. Some have thought that it might be proved from *Hof. vi. 7.* which they choose to render, *They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant*; from whence they conclude, that *Adam* was under a covenant; and so they suppose that the word *Adam* is taken for the proper name of our first parent, as 'tis probable it is elsewhere, *viz.* when *Job* says, *If I covered my transgressions, as Adam*^g, alluding to those trifling excuses which *Adam* made, to palliate his sin, immediately after his fall^h. And there are some expositors who conclude, that this is no improbable sense of this textⁱ: yet I would not lay much stress on it; because the words may be render'd, as they are in our translation, *They, like men, &c. q. d.* according to the custom of vain man, they have *transgressed the covenant*; or, they are no better than the rest of mankind, who are disposed to break covenant with God. In the same sense the Apostle uses the words, when reproving the *Corinthians*, he says, *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men*^k.

Therefore, passing this by, let us enquire, whether it may not, in some measure, be proved from that scripture, which is often brought for this purpose, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*^l; from whence 'tis argued, that, if man had retained his integrity, he would have been made partaker of the heavenly blessedness. Many, indeed, are so far from thinking this an argument to prove this matter, that they bring it as an objection against it, as though God had given man hereby to understand, that he was not, pursuant to the nature of a covenant, to expect any farther degree of happiness, than what he was already possessed of; but, agreeably to the sanction

of a law, death was to be inflicted, in case of disobedience; and life, that is, the state in which he was created, should be continued, as long as he retained his integrity: As when a legislator threatens his subjects with death, in case they are guilty of rebellion, nothing can be infer'd from thence, but that, if they do not rebel, they shall be continued in the quiet possession of what they had a natural right to, as subjects, and not that they should be advanced to a higher degree of dignity. This sense of the text, indeed, enervates the force of the argument, taken from it, to prove, that man was under a covenant: But yet I would not wholly give it up, as containing in it nothing to support the argument we are defending. For this threatening was denounced, not only to signify God's will to punish sin, or the certain event that should follow upon it, but as a motive to obedience; and therefore it includes in it a promise of life, in case he retained his integrity.

The question therefore is; what is meant by this life? or, whether it has any respect to the heavenly blessedness? In answer to which, I see no reason to conclude but that it has; since that is so often understood by the word *Life*, in scripture: thus 'tis said, *Hear and your soul shall live*^m; and, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments*ⁿ, and in many other places; therefore why should not *Life*, in this place, be taken in the same sense? So, on the other hand, when death is threaten'd, in several scriptures, it implies a privation of the heavenly blessedness, and not barely a loss of those blessings, which we are actually possessed of.

Moreover, *Adam* could not but know God to be the Fountain of blessedness, otherwise he would have been very defective in knowledge; and, when he looked into himself, he would find that he was capable of a greater degree of blessedness, than he did at present enjoy, and (which was yet more) he had a desire thereof implanted in his very nature. Now what can be infer'd from hence, but that he would conclude that God, who gave him these enlarged desires, after some farther degree of happiness arising from communion with him, would give him to expect it, in case he retained

^e Matt. vii. 14.

^f Matt. xix. 17.

^g Job xxxi. 33.

^h Gen. iii. 12.

ⁱ Vid. Grot. in *Hof. vi. 7.* Mihi latina hæc interpretatio non displicet, ut sensus hic sit; sicut *Adam*, quia pactum meum violavit, expulsus est ex Hedene; ita æquum est ex sua terrâ expelli.

^k 1 Cor. iii. 3.

^l Gen. ii. 17.

^m Isai. lv. 3.

ⁿ Matt. xix. 17.

314 Adam's being under a Covenant farther proved.

that holiness, which was implanted in his nature?

But, that it may farther appear that our first parents were given to expect a greater degree of happiness, and consequently that the dispensation, that they were under, was properly federal, let it be consider'd; that the advantages which Christ came into the world to procure for his people, which are promised to them, in the second covenant, are, for substance^o, the same with those which man would have enjoy'd, had he not fallen; for *he came to seek, and save that which was lost*, and to procure the recovery of forfeited blessings: but Christ came into the world to purchase eternal life for them; therefore this would have been enjoy'd, if there had been no need of purchasing it, viz. if man had retained his integrity.

The Apostle, speaking of the end of Christ's coming into the world, observes^p, not only, that it was to *redeem us from the curse*, or the condemning sentence of the law, but that his redeemed ones might be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham, which was a very comprehensive one, including in it, that God would be *his God, his shield, and exceeding great reward*^q; and the same Apostle elsewhere speaks of Christ's having *redeemed them that were under the law*, that is, the curse of the violated law, or covenant, *that we might receive the adoption of sons*^r, that is, that we might be made partakers of all the privileges of God's children, which certainly include in them eternal life.

Again, there is another scripture that farther supports this argument, taken from Rom. viii. 3, 4. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*; which is as tho' he should say, according to the tenor of the first covenant, eternal life was not to be expected, since it was become weak, or could not give it, because man could not yield perfect obedience, which was the condition thereof: But God's sending his own Son to perform this obedience for us, was an expedient for our attaining that life, which we could not otherwise have enjoy'd. This seems to be the ge-

neral scope and design of the Apostle in this text; and it is agreeable to the sense of many other scriptures, that speak of the advantages that believers attain by Christ's death, as compared with the disadvantages which man sustained by Adam's fall; therefore it follows, that, had Adam stood, he, and all his posterity, would have attained eternal life.

Thus we have endeavour'd to prove, that God enter'd into covenant with Adam, inasmuch as he was given to expect, that, if he had yielded perfect obedience, he should have been possessed of the heavenly blessedness. But, supposing this be not allowed of, and the arguments brought to prove it are reckon'd inconclusive, it would be sufficient to our present purpose, and would argue the dispensation that Adam was under to be that of a covenant, if God had only promised him the grace of confirmation, and not to transplant him from the earthly to the heavenly paradise; for such a privilege as this, which would have render'd his fall impossible, would have contained so advantageous a circumstance attending the state in which he was, as would have plainly proved the dispensation he was under to be federal. Therefore, before we dismiss this *Head*, we shall endeavour to make that appear, and consider,

1. That to be confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness, was necessary to render that state of blessedness, in which he was created compleat; for whatever advantages he was possessed of, it would have been a great allay to them to consider, that it was possible for him to lose them, or through any act of inadvertency, in complying with a temptation to fall, and ruin himself for ever. If the saints in heaven, who are advanced to a greater degree of blessedness, were not confirmed in it; if it was possible for them to lose, or fall from it, it would render their joy incompleat, much more would the happiness of Adam have been so, if he had been to have continued for ever, without this privilege.

2. If he had not had ground to expect the grace of confirmation in holiness and happiness, upon his yielding perfect obedience, then this perfect obedience could not, in any respect, in propriety of speaking, be said to have been conditional, unless you suppose it a condition of the

^o When I speak of the advantages being, for substance the same, it is supposed, that there are some circumstances of glory, in which that salvation, that was purchased by Christ, differs from that happiness which Adam would have been possessed of, had he persisted in his integrity.

^p Gal. iii. 13, 14.

^q Gen. xvii. 7. compared with Chap. xv. 1.

^r Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Objections against Adam's being in Covenant answer'd. 315

blessings which he was then possessed of; which seems not so agreeable to the *Idea* contained in the word *Condition*, which is consider'd as a motive to excite obedience, taken from some blessing, which would be consequent thereupon. But, if this be not allowed to have sufficient weight in it, let me add,

3. That it is agreeable to, and tends very much to advance the glory of the divine goodness, for God not to leave an innocent creature in a state of perpetual uncertainty, as to the continuance of his holiness and happiness, which he would have done, had he not promised him the grace of confirmation, whereby he would, by his immediate interposure, have prevented every thing that might have occasioned his fall.

4. This may be farther argued, from the method of God's dealing with other sinless creatures, whom he designed to make compleatly blessed, and so monuments of his abundant goodness. Thus he dealt with the holy angels, and thus he will deal with his saints, in another world; the former are, the other shall be, when arrived there, confirmed in holiness and happiness; and why should we suppose, that the goodness of God should be less glorified towards man at first, had he retained his integrity? Moreover, this will farther appear, if we consider,

5. That the dispensation of providence, which *Adam* was under, seems to carry in it the nature of a state of probation: If he was a probationer, it must either be for the heavenly glory, or, at least, for a farther degree of happiness, containing in it this grace of confirmation, which is the least that can be supposed, if there were any promise given him; and, if all other dispensations of providence, towards man, contain so many great and precious promises in them, as it is certain they do; can we suppose that man, in his state of innocency, had no promise given him? And, if he had, then I cannot but conclude, that God enter'd into covenant with him, which was the thing to be proved.

Object. 1. The Apostle, in some of the scriptures but now refer'd to, calls the dispensation, that *Adam* was under, a law; therefore we have no ground to call it a covenant.

Answer. 'Tis true, it is often called a law; but let it be consider'd, that it had two *Ideas* included in it, which are not opposite to, or inconsistent with each other,

namely, that of a law, and a covenant. As man was under a natural and indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience, and was liable to eternal death, in case of disobedience, it had in it the form and sanction of a law; and this is not inconsistent with any thing that has been before suggested, in which we have endeavour'd to maintain, that, besides this, there was something added to it that contained the nature of a covenant, which is all that we pretend to prove; and therefore the dispensation may justly take its denomination from one or the other *Idea*, provided, when one is mentioned, the other be not excluded. If we call it a law, it was such a law, as had a promise of super-added blessedness annex'd to it; or if we, on the other hand, call it a covenant, it had, notwithstanding, the obligation of a law, since it was made with a subject, who was bound, without regard to his arbitrary choice in this matter, to fulfil the demands thereof.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, against what has been said concerning man's having a promise of the heavenly blessedness given him, upon condition of obedience, that this is a privilege peculiarly adapted to the gospel-dispensation; and that our Saviour was the first that made it known to the world, as the Apostle says, that *life and immortality is brought to light through the gospel, and made manifest, by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ*^t, and therefore it was not made known by the law, and consequently there was no promise thereof made to *Adam* in innocency; and the Apostle says elsewhere, that *the way into the holiest of all, that is, into heaven, was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing, till Christ came, who obtained eternal redemption for us*^t. From whence they argue, that we have no reason to conclude that *Adam* had any promise, or expectation, founded thereon of the heavenly blessedness; and consequently the argument taken from thence to prove, that the dispensation he was under, was that of a covenant, is not conclusive.

Answer. It seems very strange, that any should infer, from the scriptures mentioned in the objection, that eternal life was altogether unknown in the world till Christ came into it, inasmuch as the meaning of those scriptures is plainly this: In the former of them, when the Apostle speaks of *life and immortality, as brought*

^t 2 Tim. i. 10.

^t Heb. ix. 8, 11, 12.

316 *Of the Conditions of the Covenant of Innocency.*

to light by the gospel, nothing else can be intended, but that this is more fully revealed by the gospel, than it was before; or, that Christ revealed this as a purchased possession, in which respect it could not be revealed before. And, if this be opposed to the revelation given to *Adam* of life and immortality, in the first covenant; notwithstanding it may be distinguished from it: for, though the heavenly blessedness was contained therein; yet it was not consider'd, as including in it the *Idea* of salvation, as it does to us, when revealed in the gospel.

As to the latter of those scriptures, concerning *the way into the holiest of all*, that is, into heaven, *not being made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing*, the meaning thereof is, that the way of our redemption, by Jesus Christ, was not so clearly revealed, or with those circumstances of glory, under the ceremonial law, as it is by the gospel; or, at least, whatever discoveries were made thereof, yet the promises had not their full accomplishment, till Christ came and erected the gospel-dispensation; this, therefore, doth not, in the least, militate against the argument we are maintaining. Thus concerning the blessing promised in this covenant, namely, life, by which it farther appears to be a federal dispensation.

(3.) We are now to consider the condition of man's obtaining this blessing, which, as it is expressed in this *Answer*, was personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience.

1. He was obliged to perform obedience, which was agreeable to his character, as a subject, and thereby to own the sovereignty of his Creator, and Lawgiver, and the equity of his law, and his right to govern him, according to it, which obligation was natural, necessary, and indispensable.

2. This obedience was to be personal, that is, not performed by any other in his behalf, and imputed to him, as his obedience was to be imputed to all his posterity; and therefore, in that respect, it would not have been personal, as applied to them; or as the obedience of Christ is imputed to us in the second covenant.

3. It was to be perfect, without the least defect, and that both in heart and life: He was obliged to do every thing that God required, as well as abstain from every thing that he forbade him; therefore we are not to suppose, that it was

only his eating the forbidden fruit that would ruin him, though that was the particular sin by which he fell, since his doing any other thing, that was in it self sinful, or his neglecting any thing that was required, would equally have occasioned his fall.

But, since we are considering man's obligation to yield obedience to the divine law, it follows, from hence, that it was necessary that there should be an intimation given of the rule, or matter, of his obedience, and consequently that the law of God should be made known to him; for it is absolutely necessary, not only that a law should be enacted, but promulgated, before the subject is bound to obey it. Now the law of God was made known to man two ways, agreeable to the twofold distinction thereof.

1st. The law of nature was written on his heart, in which the wisdom of God did as much discover it self, as in the subject matter of this law. In this respect, the whole law of nature might be said to be made known to him at once; the knowledge of which was communicated to him, with the powers and faculties of his soul, and was, as it were, instamped on his nature; so that he might as well plead, that he was not an intelligent creature, as that he was destitute of the knowledge of this law.

2^{dly}. As there were, besides this, several other positive laws, that man was obliged to yield obedience to, though these could not, properly speaking, be said to be written on his heart; yet he had the knowledge hereof communicated to him. Whether this was done all at once, or at various times, it is not for us to determine; however, this we must conclude, that these positive laws could not be known in a way of reasoning, as the law of nature might: But, since we have sufficient ground to conclude, that God was pleased, in different ways and times, to communicate his mind and will to man, we are not to suppose that he was destitute of the knowledge of all those positive laws, that he was obliged to obey.

What the number of these laws was we know not; but, as there have been, in all ages, various positive laws relating to instituted worship, doubtless, *Adam* had many such laws revealed to him, though not mentioned in scripture. This I cannot but observe, because some persons use such modes of speaking about this matter, as though there were no other

Perpetual Obedience, in what respect Man obliged to it. 317

other positive law, that man was obliged to obey, but that of his not eating of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, or, together with it, that which related to the observation of the sabbath.

4. The obedience, which man was to perform, was to be perpetual; by which we are not to understand, that it was to be performed to eternity, under the notion of a condition of the covenant, though it certainly was, as this covenant contained in it the obligation of a law: The reason of this is very obvious; for, when any thing is performed, as a condition of obtaining a subsequent blessing, it is supposed, that this blessing is not to be confer'd till the condition is performed: But that is inconsistent with the eternal duration of this obedience, on the performance whereof the heavenly blessedness was to be confer'd; and therefore, though divines often use the word *Perpetual*, when treating on this subject, it must be understood with this limitation, that man was to obey, without any interruption or defect, so long as he remained in a state of probation; and this obedience had a peculiar reference to the dispensation, as it was federal: But, when this state of trial was over, and the blessing, promised on this condition, confer'd, then, though the same obedience was to be performed to eternity, it would not be consider'd as the condition of a covenant, but as the obligation of a law. And this leads us to enquire,

Whether we may not, with some degree of probability, without being guilty of a sinful curiosity, determine any thing relating to the time of man's continuance in a state of trial, before the blessing promised, at least, that part of it, which consisted in the grace of confirmation, would have been confer'd upon him. Though I would not enter into any subject that is over-curious, or pretend to determine that which is altogether uncertain, yet, I think, this is not to be reckon'd so, especially if we be not too peremptory, or exceed the bounds of modesty, in what respects this matter. All that I shall say, concerning it, is, that it seems very probable that our first parents would have continued no longer in this state of probation, but would have attained the grace of confirmation, which is a considerable circumstance in the blessing promised in this covenant, as soon as they had children arrived to an age capa-

ble of obeying, or sinning themselves, which, how long that would have been, it is a vain thing to pretend to determine.

The reason why divines suppose, that *Adam's* state of probation would have continued no longer, is, because these children must then either be supposed to have been confirmed in that state of holiness and happiness, in which they were, or not. If they had been confirmed therein, then they would have attained the blessings of this covenant, before *Adam* had fulfilled the condition thereof: If they had not been confirmed, then it was possible for them to have fallen, and yet for him to have stood; and so his performing the condition of the covenant, would not have procured the blessing thereof for them, which is contrary to the tenor thereof. When our first parents would have been removed from paradise to heaven, and so have attained the perfection of the blessings contained in this covenant, it would be a vain, presumptuous, and unprofitable thing to enquire into.

(4.) The last thing observed, in this *Answer*, is what some call the seals annexed to this covenant, as an ordinance designed to confirm their faith therein; and these were the two trees mentioned in *Gen. ii.* of which the tree of life was more properly called a seal, than the tree of knowledge, of good and evil.

1. Concerning the tree of life, several things may be observed.

1st. It was a single tree, not a species of trees, bearing one sort of fruit, as some suppose: This is evident, because it is expressly said, that it was planted *in the midst of the garden* ^u.

2^{dly}. The fruit thereof is said, in the same scripture, to be *pleasant to the sight, and good for food*, as well as that of other trees, which were ordained for the same purpose. It is a vain thing to enquire what sort of fruit it was; and it is better to confess our ignorance hereof, than to pretend to be wise above what is written.

3^{dly}. It is called the tree of life. Some suppose, that the principal, if not the only reason, of its being so called, was, because it was ordained to preserve man's natural life, or prevent any decay of nature, or to restore it, if it were in the least impair'd, to its former vigour. And accordingly they suppose, that, though man was made immortal, yet some things might have happen'd to him, which

^u Gen. ii. 9.

would have had a tendency to impair his health, in some degree, and weaken and destroy the temperament of his body, by which means death would gradually, according to the course of nature, be brought upon him: But, as a relief against this, he had a remedy always at hand; for the fruit of this tree, by a medicinal virtue, would as effectually restore him to his former state of health, as much as meat, drink, and rest, have a natural virtue to repair the fatigues, and supply the necessities of nature, in those who have the most heathful constitution, which would, notwithstanding, be destroy'd, without the use thereof: But, though there be somewhat of spirit and ingenuity in this supposition; yet why may we not suppose, that the use of any other food might have the same effect, which would be always ready at hand, whenever he had occasion for it, or where-ever he resided?

Therefore I cannot but conclude, that the principal, if not the only reason, of the tree of life's being so called, was, because it was, by God's appointment, a sacramental sign and ordinance for the faith of our first parents, that, if they retained their integrity, they might be assured of the blessed event thereof, to wit, eternal life, of which this was, as it is called in this *Answer*, a pledge; and it contain'd in it the same *Idea*, for substance, as other sacraments do, namely, as it was designed not to confer, but to signify the blessing promised, and as a farther means to encourage their expectation thereof: Thus our first parents were to eat of the fruit of this tree, agreeably to the nature of other sacramental signs, with this view, that hereby the thing signified might be brought to their remembrance, and they might take occasion, at the same time, to rely on God's promise relating to the blessing which they expected; and they might be as much assured, that they should attain eternal life, in case they persisted in their obedience, as they were, that God had given them this tree, and liberty to eat thereof, with the expectation of this blessing signified thereby.

Now, to make it appear, that it was designed as a sacramental sign of eternal life, which was promised in this covenant, we may consider those allusions to it in the New Testament, whereby the heavenly glory is set forth: thus 'tis said,

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God^{*}; and elsewhere, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life*^v. It seems very plain, that this respects, in those scriptures, the heavenly glory, which is called the *New Jerusalem*, for it has a particular application to that state of the church, *When God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying*^z; and it is mentioned immediately after, *Christ's coming quickly, and his reward's being with him*^a; and there are several other passages, which might be easily observed, which agree only with the heavenly state. Therefore, since this glory is thus described, why may we not suppose, that the heavenly state was signified by this tree to *Adam*, in paradise?

And, that this may farther appear, let it be consider'd, that nothing is more common, in scripture, than for the Holy Ghost to represent the thing signified by the sign: Thus sanctification, which was one thing signified by circumcision, is called, *The circumcision made without hands*^b; and regeneration, which is signified by baptism, is called, our *being born of water*^c; and Christ, whose death was signified by the passover, is called, *Our Passover*^d. Many other instances, of the like nature, might be produced; therefore, since the heavenly glory is represented by the tree of life, why may we not suppose, that the reason of its being so called, was, because it was ordain'd, at first, to be a sacramental sign or pledge of eternal life, which our first parents were given to expect, according to the tenor of that covenant, which they were under.

Object. 1. It is objected, by some, that sacramental signs, ceremonies, or types, were only adapted to that dispensation, which the church of the *Jews* were under, and therefore were not agreeable to that state in which man was at first.

Answer. The ceremonial law, 'tis true, was not known, nor did it take place, while man was in a state of innocency; nor was it God's ordinary way to instruct him then by signs; yet it is not inconsistent with that state, for God to ordain one or two signs, as ordinances, for the faith of our first parents, the signification whereof was adapted to the state, in which they were, any more than our Saviour's instituting two significant ordi-

^{*} Rev. ii. 7.
^e John iii. 5.

^v Chap. xxii. 14.
^d 1 Cor. v. 7.

^a Chap. xxi. 4.

^z Chap. xxii. 12.

^b Coloss. ii. 11.

nances under the gospel, viz. Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, as having relation to the blessings expected therein, is inconsistent with this present dispensation, in which we have nothing to do with the ceremonial law, any more than our first parents had. And all this argues nothing more, than that God may, if he pleases, in any state of the church, instruct them in those things, which their faith should be conversant about, in what way he pleases.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, that the tree of life was not designed to be a sacramental sign of the covenant, which our first parents were under, but rather, as was before observed, an expedient, to render them immortal, in a natural way, inasmuch as when man was fallen, yet the tree of life had still the same virtue: Accordingly 'tis said, *Lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth out of the garden of Eden; and he drove out the man: and placed cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.* And some extend this objection so far, as that they suppose man did not eat of the tree of life before he fell, which, had he done, he would, by virtue of his eating of it, have lived for ever, notwithstanding his sin; or if, as soon as he had fallen, he had had that happy thought, and so had eaten of it, he might, even then, have prevented death; and therefore God drove him out of paradise, that he might not eat of it, that so the curse, consequent upon his fall, might take effect.

Ans. The absurdity of this objection, and the method of reasoning made use of to support it, will appear, if we consider, that there was something more lost by man's fall, besides immortality, which no fruit, produced by any tree, could restore to him. And besides, man was then liable to that curse, which was denounced, by which he was under an indispensable necessity of returning to the dust, from

whence he was taken; and therefore the tree of life could not make this threatening of no effect, though man had eaten of it, after his fall: But, since the whole force of the objection depends on the sense they put on the text before mentioned, agreeable thereunto, the only reply that we need give to it is, by considering what is the true and proper sense thereof.

When it is said, *God drove out the man, lest he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever*; the meaning thereof is, as though he should say, Lest the poor deceived creature, who is now become blind, ignorant, and exposed to error, should eat of this tree, and think to live for ever, as he did before the fall, therefore he shall be driven out of paradise. This was, in some respect, an act of kindness to him, to prevent a mistake, which might have been of pernicious tendency, in turning him aside from seeking salvation in the promised seed. Besides, when the thing signified, by this tree, was not to be obtained that way, in which it was before, it ceased to be a sacramental sign; and therefore, as he had no right to it, so it would have been no less than a profanation to make a religious use of it, in his fallen state.

2. The other tree, which we read of, whereof our first parents were forbidden to eat, upon pain of death, is called, *The tree of knowledge, of good and evil*; though the fruit of this tree was, in it self, proper for food, as well as that of any other; yet God forbade man to eat of it, out of his mere sovereignty; and that he might hereby let him know, that he enjoy'd nothing but by his grant, and that he must abstain from things apparently good, if he require it. 'Tis a vain thing to pretend to determine what sort of fruit this tree produced: It is, indeed, a commonly received opinion, that it was an apple-tree, or some species thereof; but, though I will not determine this to be a vulgar error, yet I cannot but think it a groundless conjecture; and therefore I

^c Gen. iii. 22, 23, 24.

^f The principal argument brought to prove this, is the application of that scripture, to this purpose, in *Cant. viii. 5.* *I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth, q. d. the church, when fallen by our first parents eating the fruit of this tree, was raised up, when the Messiah was first promised: But, though this be a truth, yet whether it be the thing intended, by the Holy Ghost, in that scripture, is uncertain. As for the opinion of those who suppose it was a fig-tree, as Theodoret, [vid. Quest. XXVIII. in Gen.] and some other ancient writers; that has no other foundation, but what we read, concerning our first parents sewing fig-leaves together, and making themselves aprons, which, they suppose, was done before they departed from the tree, their shame immediately suggesting the necessity thereof. But others think, that whatever tree it were, it certainly was not a fig-tree, because it can hardly be supposed, but that our first parents, having a sense of guilt, as well as shame, would be afraid so much as to touch that tree, which had occasioned their ruin. Others conclude, that it was a vine, because our Saviour appointed, that wine, which the vine produces, should be used, in commemorating his death, which removed the effects of that curse, which sin brought on the world: But this is a vain and trifling method of reasoning, and discovers what lengths some men run, in their absurd glosses on scripture.*

320 *Our first Parents endued with Freedom of Will.*

would rather profess my ignorance as to this matter.

As to the reason of its being called the tree of knowledge, of good and evil. Some have given great scope to their wit and fancy, in advancing groundless conjectures: Thus the *Jewish* historian^e, and, after him, several Rabbinical writers, have supposed, that it was thus described, as there was an internal virtue in the fruit thereof, to brighten the minds of men, and, in a natural way, make them wise. And *Socinus*, and some of his brethren, have so far improved upon this absurd supposition, that they have supposed, that our first parents, before they eat of this tree, had not much more knowledge than infants have, which they found on the literal sense they give of that scripture, which represents them as not knowing that they were naked^h. But enough of these absurdities, which carry in them their own confutation. I cannot but think 'tis called, the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, to signify, that, as man before knew, by experience, what it was to enjoy that good which God had confer'd upon him, the consequence of his eating thereof would be, his having an experimental knowledge of evil.

All that I shall add, concerning this prohibition, which God gave to our first parents, is, that, as to the matter of it, it was one of those laws, which are founded in God's arbitrary will, and therefore the thing was render'd sinful, only by its being forbidden; nevertheless, man's disobedience to it render'd him no less guilty, than if he had transgressed any of the laws of nature.

Moreover, it was a very small thing for him to have yielded obedience to this law, which was designed as a trial of his readiness, to perform universal obedience in all the instances thereof. It was not so difficult a duty, as that which God afterwards commanded *Abraham* to perform, when he bad him offer up his son; neither was he under a necessity of eating thereof, since he had such a liberal provision of all things for his sustenance and delight; and therefore his sin, in not complying herewith, was the more aggravated. Besides, he was expressly cautioned against it, and told, that *in the day that he eat of it, he should die*; whereby God, foreseeing that he would disobey this command, determined to

leave him without excuse. This was that transgression by which he fell, and brought on the world all the miseries that have ensued thereon.

QUEST. XXI. *Did man continue in that estate wherein God, at first, created him?*

ANSW. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of satan, transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and thereby fell from the state of innocence, wherein they were created.

IN this Answer,

I. There is something supposed, namely, that our first parents were endued with a freedom of will. This is a property belonging to man, as a reasonable creature; so that we may as well separate understanding from the mind, as liberty from the will, especially when 'tis conversant about things within its own sphere, and, most of all, when we consider man in a state of perfection, as to all the powers and faculties of his soul, as he was before the fall. Now, that we may understand what this freedom of will was, let it be consider'd, that it consisted in a power, which man had, of choosing, or embracing, what appear'd agreeably, to the dictates of his understanding, to be good, or refusing and avoiding what was evil, and that without any constraint, or force, laid upon him, to act contrary to the dictates thereof; and it also supposes a power to act pursuant to what the will chooses, otherwise it could not secure the happiness that it desires, or avoid the evil that it detests, and then its liberty would be little more than a name, without the thing contained in it.

Moreover, since the thing that the will chooses, is supposed to be agreeable to the dictates of the understanding, it follows, that if there be an error in judgment; or a destructive, or unlawful object presents it self, under the notion of good, though it be really evil, the will is,

^e Vid. Joseph. Antiquit. Lib. I. cap. 2. Dei Fil.

^h Vid. Socin. de Stat. Prim. Hom. & Smalc. de Ver. & Nat.

Our first Parents left to the Freedom of their own Will. 321

notwithstanding, said to act freely, in choosing or embracing it, in which respect 'tis free to evil, as well as to good.

To apply this to our present purpose, we must suppose man, in his state of innocency, to have been without any defect in his understanding, and therefore that he could not, when making a right use of the powers and faculties of his soul, call evil good, or good evil. Nevertheless, through inadvertency, the mind might be imposed on, and that which was evil might be represented under the appearance of good, and accordingly the will determine it self to choose or embrace it; for this is not inconsistent with liberty, since it might have been avoided by the right improvement of his natural powers, and therefore he was not constrained, or forced to sin.

Now it appears, that our first parents had this freedom of will, or power to retain their integrity; from their being under an indispensible obligation to yield perfect obedience, and liable to punishment for the least defect thereof. This therefore supposes the thing not to be in it self impossible, or the punishment ensuing unavoidable; therefore it follows, that they had a power to stand, or, which is all one, a liberty of will, to choose that which was conducive to their happiness.

This might also be argued from the difference that there is between man's innocent and fallen state. Nothing is more evident, than that man, as fallen, is by a necessity of nature, inclined to sin; and accordingly he is stiled, *a servant of sin*¹, or a slave to it, entirely under its dominion: But it was otherwise with him before his fall, when, according to the constitution of his nature, he was equally inclined to what is good, and furnished with every thing that was necessary to his yielding that obedience, which was demanded of him.

II. 'Tis farther observed, that our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will. This implies, that God did not design, especially while they were in this state of probation, to afford them that immediate help, by the interposure of his providence, which would have effectually prevented their compliance with any temptation to sin; for that would have render'd their fall impossible, and would have been a granting them the blessing of confirmation, before the con-

dition thereof was fulfilled. God could easily have prevented the devil's entrance into paradise; as he does his coming again into heaven, to give disturbance to, or lay snares for any of the inhabitants thereof; or, though he suffer'd him to assault our first parents, he might, by the interposure of his grace, have prevented that inadvertency, by which they gave the first occasion to his victory over them. There was no need for God to implant a new principle of grace in their souls; for, by the right use of the liberty of their own wills, they might have defended themselves against the temptation; and, had he given them a present intimation of their danger, or especially excited those habits of grace, which were implanted in their souls, at that time, when there was most need thereof, their sinful compliance with satan's temptation would have been prevented: but this God was not obliged to do; and accordingly he is said to leave them to the freedom of their own wills. And this does not render him the author of their sin, or bring them under a natural necessity of falling, inasmuch as he had before furnished them with sufficiency of strength to stand. Man was not like an infant, or a person enfeebled, by some bodily distemper, who has no ability to support himself, and therefore, if not upheld by another, must necessarily fall: But he was like a strong man, who, by taking heed to his steps, may prevent his falling, without the assistance of others. He had no propensity in nature to sin, whereby he stood in need of preventing grace; and God, in thus leaving him to himself, dealt with him in a way agreeable to the condition in which he was. He did not force, or incline him to sin, but left him to the mutability of his own will, according to the tenor of the dispensation which he was under.

III. It is farther observed, that there was an assault made on our first parents by satan, not by violence, but by temptation; the consequence whereof was, that, by sinful compliance therewith, they fell from their state of innocency. It appears very evident, from scripture, that they were deceived, or beguiled, as *Eve* says, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat*². And the Apostle *Paul* speaks concerning it to the same effect, *The woman being deceived, was in the transgression*³; in

¹ John viii. 34.

² Gen. iii. 13.

³ 1 Tim. ii. 14.

322 Adam tempted by Eve, and she by the Devil in the Serpent.

which scripture, though it be said, in the foregoing words, that *Adam was not deceived*; probably nothing more than this is intended, that the man was not first deceived, or not immediately deceived, by the serpent, but by his wife; though, indeed, some give another turn to that expression, and suppose, that *Adam* sinned knowingly, being content to plunge himself into the depths of misery, in complaisance to her, that she might have a partner with her in her sorrows^m: But we rather think, that the Apostle does not speak of *Adam's* not being deceived, but rather of his not being first deceived, or first in the transgression.

Now this deception, or temptation, was from the devil, who, because of his subtilty, is called, *That old serpent*ⁿ; and he is said to make use of *wiles*^o; that is, various methods of deceit in suiting his temptations, so that men may be ensnared by them; which leads us to consider,

IV. The methods he took to deceive our first parents, as we have a particular account thereof, and of their compliance therewith, in *Gen. iii. 1—6.* in which we shall take occasion to observe who the tempter was; and the way and manner how he assaulted them.

There are two extreams of opinion, which some run into, which are equally to be avoided. On the one hand, some suppose that it was a beast, or natural serpent, that was the tempter, and that the devil had no hand in the temptation; whereas others suppose, that there was no serpent made use of, but that the devil did all without it, and that he is stiled a serpent, in that scripture, from his subtilty. This we call another extream of opinion, and, indeed, the truth lies in a medium between them both; therefore we must suppose, that there was really a natural serpent, a beast so called, made use of, as an instrument, by the devil, by which he managed the temptation, and accordingly that he possessed and spake by it, which is the most common opinion, and agrees best with the account given of it in the above-mentioned scripture, and it is also consistent with what our Saviour says of him,

when describing him as *a murderer from the beginning*^p.

That it was not only, or principally, the natural serpent that tempted our first parents, will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That, though the serpent, indeed, is said to be more subtle than all the beasts of the field, yet it never was endowed with speech^q, and therefore could not, unless actuated by a spirit, hold a discourse with *Eve*, as he is said to have done.

(2.) Brute creatures cannot reason, or argue, as the serpent did; for, whatever appearance of reason there may be in them, it would be a very hard matter to prove that they are capable of digesting their *Ideas* into a chain of reasoning, or inferring consequences from premises, as the serpent did; much less are they capable of reasoning about divine subjects, who know nothing of God, or the nature of moral good or evil, as the serpent that tempted *Eve* must be supposed to have done: But though the serpent was not the principal agent herein, yet it was made use of by the devil; and therefore the whole history, which we have thereof in the place before mentioned, is not an allegorical account of what satan did, as some suppose, without any regard to the part that the serpent bore therein.

This appears from the curse denounced against the serpent, *Because thou hast done this, saith God, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life*^r; which is only applicable to the beast so called, and this we see evidently fulfilled at this day. Some, from hence, infer, not, I think, without reason, that the serpent, before this, went erect; whereas afterwards, as containing the visible mark of the curse, it is said to go on its belly. This part of the curse therefore respected the natural serpent only; whereas that contained in the following words, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*^s, respects the devil, that actuated, or spake by it; though I am not insen-

^m This is beautifully described by *Milton*, [in his *Paradise Lost*, Book IX.] and many others have asserted the same thing for substance, as thinking it below the wisdom of the man to be imposed on, thereby insinuating, though without sufficient ground, that he had a greater degree of wisdom allotted to him than his wife.

ⁿ Rev. xii. 9. Chap. xx. 2.

^o Eph. vi. 11.

^p John viii. 44.

^q *Josephus*, indeed, [See *Antiq. Lib. I. cap. 2.*] intimates, that the serpent was, at first, endowed with speech, and that his loss of it was inflicted for his tempting man; but it is a groundless conjecture, arising from a supposition, that those things spoken of in *Gen. iii.* which are attributed to the devil, were done without him, which is not only his opinion, but of many other *Jewish* writers, and several modern ones.

^r Gen. iii. 14.

^s Ver. 15.

The Methods used by Satan in tempting our first Parents. 323

fible that some *Jewish* writers, and others, who would exempt the devil from having any hand in the temptation, and throw all the blame on the brute creature, the natural serpent, give a very jejune and empty sense of this text, as though it were to be taken altogether, according to the letter thereof, as importing, that there should be a war between man and the serpent, that so he might be revenged on him, which should never cease till he had slain him, or had bruised his head: But it seems very plain, that as the former *Verse* respects the instrument made use of, *viz.* the natural serpent, so this respects the devil, and contains a prediction, that his malice should be defeated, and his power destroy'd, by our Saviour, who is here promised, and described, as *the seed of the woman*. From all which we are bound to conclude, that the devil, making use of the serpent, was the tempter, by whom our first parents were seduced, and led astray from God, to the ruin of themselves, and all their posterity.

There are several things that may be observed in the method satan took in managing this temptation, by which he seduced and overcame our first parents, of which we have an account in the scripture before-mentioned.

1. He concealed his character as a fallen spirit, and pretended himself to be in circumstances not unlike to those in which our first parents were, at least in this, that he seemed to pay a deference to the great God, so far as to allow that he had a right to give laws to his creatures; and it is more than probable that this was done immediately after his fall. And that our first parents knew nothing of this instance of rebellion in heaven, and did not, in the least, suppose that there were any creatures who were enemies to God, or were using endeavours to render them so. Had the devil given *Eve* an historical narration of his sin and fall, and begun his temptation with open blasphemy, or reproach cast on God, whom he had rebelled against, he could not but apprehend that our first parents would have treated him with the utmost abhorrence, and fled from him as an open enemy; but he conceals his enmity to God, while he pretends friendship to them, which was a great instance of subtilty; inasmuch as an enemy is never more formidable, than when he puts on a specious pretence of religion, or conceals his vile character as an enemy to God, and, at

the same time, pretends a great deal of friendship to those whom he designs to ruin.

2. As he tempted our first parents soon after his own fall, which shews his restless malice against God and goodness; so it was not long after their creation, in which he shewed his subtilty, not barely, as some suppose, because he was apprehensive, that the longer man stood, the more his habits of grace would be strengthened, and so it would be more difficult for the temptation to take effect: But that which seems to be the principal reason, was, either because he was apprehensive that man might soon have an intimation given him, that there were some fallen spirits, who were laying snares for his ruin, and therefore he would have been more guarded against him, or principally because he did not know but that man might soon be confirm'd in his state of holiness and happiness; for how long God would continue him in a state of probation, was not revealed, and the devil knew very well, that, upon his obtaining the grace of confirmation, after he had yielded obedience for a time, all his temptations would prove ineffectual; therefore he applied himself to his work with the greatest expedition.

3. He assaulted *Eve* when she was alone. This, indeed, is not expressly mentioned in scripture; but yet it seems very probable, inasmuch as he directed his discourse to, and held a conference with her, and not with *Adam*, which, doubtless, he would have done, had he been present; and then it could hardly have been said, as the Apostle does in the scripture before mentioned, that the woman was *first in the transgression*, and that she was first deceived by the serpent; and, indeed, had he been with her, though she might have been first in eating the forbidden fruit; yet he would have sinned, as being a partaker with her therein, by suffering her to comply with the temptation, and not warning her of her danger, or endeavouring to detect the devil's sophistry, and restrain her from compliance therewith. As the law deems every one to be principals in traitorous conspiracies against a prince, if they are only present, provided they don't use those proper means which they ought, to prevent it; accordingly if *Adam* had been with *Eve*, he would have sinned with her, before he received the forbidden fruit from her hand; which we don't find him

324 *The Devil's Subtilty in managing the Temptation.*

him charged with; therefore she was alone, on which account the devil took her at the greatest disadvantage; for, as the wise man well observes, *Two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth*¹.

4. The instrument satan made use of, was, as was before observed, the serpent: Probably he was not suffer'd to take a human shape; or, if he had, that would not so well have answer'd his end, since it would have tended to amuse and surprise our first parents, and have put them upon enquiries who he was, and whence he came, for they knew that there were no human creatures formed but themselves. If he had made use of an inanimate creature, it would have been more surprising to hear it speak and reason about the providence of God; and if he had not assumed any visible shape, he could not have managed the temptation with that success; for there was no corrupt nature in our first parents to work upon, as there is in us. Therefore some are ready to conclude, that no temptation can be offer'd to an innocent creature, in an internal way, by the devil; therefore it must be presented to the senses, and consequently it was necessary that he should assume some shape, and particularly that of some brute creature, that he might more effectually carry on his temptation. And it was expedient to answer his design, that he should not make use of any brute creature, that is naturally more stupid, and therefore less fit for his purpose; accordingly he made use of the serpent, concerning which it is observed, that it is *more subtil than any beast of the field*; and, as some suppose, it was, at first, a very beautiful creature, however odious it is to mankind at present, and that it had a bright shining skin curiously painted with variety of colours, which, when the sun shone upon it, cast a bright reflection of all the colours of the rainbow. But passing this by, as what is uncertain.

5. It is probable that the devil took that opportunity to discourse with *Eve* about the tree of knowledge, when she was standing by, or, at least, not far from it, that so he might prevail with her to comply with the temptation in haste; whereas, if he had given her room for too much deliberation, it might have prevented his design from taking effect: If she had been at some distance from the

tree, she would have had time to consider what she was going about; she did not want understanding to detect the fallacy, had she duly weighed matters, and therefore would hardly have complied with the temptation. Again, that she was, at least, within sight of the tree, appears from hence, that the serpent takes occasion, from the beholding of it, to discourse about it, and commend it; and, while he was speaking about it to her, *she saw that it was pleasant to the eye, and good for food*.

6. As to what respects the matter of the temptation, we may observe, that the devil did not immediately tempt her to blaspheme God, to proclaim open war against him, or to break one of the commandments of the moral law; but to violate a positive law, which, though heinous in its own nature, as it was a practical disowning, or denying the sovereignty of God, and had many other aggravations attending it; yet the breach of positive laws, founded on God's arbitrary will, are generally reckon'd less aggravated, or we are inclined to entertain the temptation thereunto with less abhorrence than when we are tempted to break one of the moral laws, which are founded in the nature of God. Had he tempted her to deny that there was a God, or that there was any worship due to him; or had it been to have murder'd her husband, or to commit any other crime, which is in it self shocking to human nature, he would have had less ground to conclude that his temptation would have taken effect.

And here we may observe, that he proceeded, in a gradual way, from less to greater insinuations, brought against God.

(1.) He does not immediately and directly, in his first onset, bring a charge against God, or his providence, but pretends ignorance, and speaks as one that wanted information, when he says, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden, q. d.* Here is a garden well stored with fruit, the trees whereof are designed for your food; are there any which you are prohibited from eating of? This question occasions her reply; *The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it; neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* Some think, that her sin began here, and that she misrepresents the divine pro-

hibition,

¹ Eccles. iv. 9, 10.

hibition, for she was not forbid to touch it; it is only said, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*^u: But I cannot see that this was any other than a just inference from the prohibition it self, as every thing is to be avoided that may prove an occasion of sin, as well as the sin it self. Others suppose, that there is a degree of unbelief contained in that expression, *Lest ye die*^x; which may be render'd, *Lest peradventure ye die*, as implying, that it was possible for God to dispense with his threatening, and so death would not certainly ensue; whereas God had expressly said, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. But passing by this, as an uncertain conjecture, let us farther consider,

(2.) After this, satan proceeds from questioning, as though he desired information to a direct and explicit confronting the divine threatening, endeavouring to perswade her, that God would not be just to his word, when he says, *Ye shall not surely die*. He then proceeds yet farther, to cast an open reproach on the great God, when he says, *God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*. Here we may observe,

1st. That he prefaces this reproach in a most vile and wicked manner, with an appeal to God for a confirmation of what he was about falsely to suggest, *God doth know*, &c.

2^{dly}. He puts her in mind, that there were some creatures above her, with an intent to excite in her, pride and envy: and it is as though he had said; notwithstanding your dominion over the creatures in this lower world, there are other creatures above you; for so our translation renders the word, *gods*, meaning the angels. And satan farther suggests, that these excel man, as in many other things, so particularly in knowledge, thereby tempting her to be discontented with her present condition; and, since knowledge is the highest of all natural excellencies, he tempts her hereby to desire a greater degree hereof, than God had allotted her, especially in her present state, and so to desire to be equal to the angels in knowledge, which might seem to her a plausible suggestion, since knowledge is a desirable perfection. He does not commend the knowledge of fallen angels, or per-

swade her to desire to be like them, but to be like those who are the greatest favourites of God. From whence it may be observed, that it is a sin to desire many things that are in themselves excellent, provided it be the will of God that we should not enjoy them.

But it may be observed, that a different sense may be given of the *Hebrew* word, which we translate *gods*: for it may as well be render'd, *Ye shall be like God*, that is, *Ye shall have a greater degree of the image of God*; particularly, that part of it that consists in knowledge. But however plausible this suggestion might seem to be, she ought not to have desired this privilege, if God did not design to give it, especially before the condition of the covenant she was under was perform'd; much less ought she to have ventured to have sinned against God to obtain it.

3^{dly}. Satan farther suggests, that her eating of the tree of knowledge would be a means to attain this greater degree of knowledge; therefore he says, *In the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be open'd, &c.* We can't suppose, that he thought her so stupid as to conclude that there was a natural vertue in the fruit of this tree, to produce this effect; for none can reasonably suppose that there is a natural connection between eating and increasing in knowledge. Therefore we may suppose, that he pretends that the eating thereof was God's ordinance for the attaining of knowledge; so that, as the tree of life was a sacramental ordinance, to signify man's attaining eternal life, this tree was an ordinance for her attaining knowledge; and therefore that God's design in prohibiting her from eating of it was, that she should be kept in ignorance, in comparison with what she might attain to by eating of it: Vile and blasphemous insinuation! to suggest, not only that God envy'd her a privilege, which would have been so highly advantageous, but that the sinful violation of his law was an ordinance to obtain it.

It is farther supposed, by some, though not mentioned in scripture, that satan, to make his temptation more effectual, took and eat of the fruit of the tree himself, and pretended, as an argument to perswade her to do so likewise, that it was by this means, that he, being a serpent, and

^u Gen. ii. 17.

^x The words of the prohibition, in *Gen. ii. 17.* are, *Ye shall surely die*; whereas, in the account she gives thereof to the serpent, her words are, *פן-חמתי* which *Onkelos*, in his Targum, renders, *Ne forte moriamini*.

326 Of Adam's sin, and the immediate Consequences thereof.

as such on a level with other beasts of the same species, had arrived to the faculty of talking and reasoning, so that now he had attained a kind of equality with man; therefore if she eat of the same fruit, she might easily suppose she should attain to be equal with angels. By these temptations, *Eve* was prevailed on, and so we read, that she *took of the fruit thereof, and did eat*; it may be, the fruit was plucked off by the serpent, and held out to her, and she, with a trembling hand, received it from him, and thereby fell from her state of innocence.

Having consider'd the fall of *Eve*, who was the first in the transgression, we are now to speak of the fall of *Adam*: This is express'd more concisely in the fore-mentioned *Chapter, Ver. 6. She gave also unto her husband, and he did eat.* We are not to suppose that she gave him this fruit to eat, without his consent to take it; or that she did not preface this action with something not recorded in scripture: But it is most probable that she reported to him what had pass'd between her and the serpent, and prevailed on him by the same arguments which she was overcome by; so that *Adam's* fall was, in some respect, owing to the devil, though *Eve* was the more immediate instrument thereof. And to this we may add, that, besides her alledging the arguments which the serpent had used to seduce her, it is more than probable she continued eating her self, and commending the pleasantness of the taste thereof, above all other fruits, as it might seem to her, when fallen, to be much more pleasant than really it was; for forbidden fruit is sweet to corrupt nature. And besides, we may suppose, that, through a bold presumption, and the blindness of her mind, and the hardness of her heart, which immediately ensued on her fall, she might insinuate to her husband, that what the serpent had suggested was really true, for as he had said, *Ye shall not surely die*; so now, though she had eaten thereof, she was yet alive, and therefore that he might eat thereof, without fearing any evil consequence that would attend it: By this means, he was prevailed upon, and hereby the ruin of mankind was completed; thus concerning their sin and fall.

V. We shall now consider what followed thereupon, as contained in that farther account we have of it, in *Gen. iii. 7, &c.* And here we may observe,

1. That they immediately betray and discover their fallen state, inasmuch as they, who before knew not what shame or fear meant, now experienced these consequences inseparable from sin: They knew that they were naked, and accordingly they were ashamed; and had a sense of guilt in their consciences, and therefore were afraid. This appears in that,

2. God calls them to an account for what they had done, and they, through fear, hide themselves from his presence; which shews how soon ignorance followed after the fall. How unreasonable was it to think that they could hide themselves from God? since *there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves* ^v.

3. God expostulates with each of them, and they make excuses; the man lays the blame upon his wife, *Ver. 12. The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*; which contains a charge against God himself, as throwing the blame on his providence, *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me.* And here was an instance of a breach of affection between him and his wife: As sin occasions breaches in families, and an alienation of affection in the nearest relations, he complains of her, as the cause of his ruin, as though he had not been active in this matter himself.

The woman, on the other hand, lays the whole blame on the serpent, *Ver. 13. The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* There was, indeed, a deception, or beguiling; for, as has been already observed, an innocent creature can hardly sin, but through inadvertency, as not apprehending the subtilty of the temptation, though a fallen creature sins presumptuously, and with deliberation; however, she should not have laid the whole blame on the serpent, for she had wisdom enough to have detected the fallacy, and rectitude of nature sufficient to have preserved her from compliance with the temptation, if she had improved those endowments which God gave her at first.

We shall now consider the aggravations of the sin of our first parents. It contained in it many other sins. Some have taken pains to shew how they broke all the *Ten Commandments*, in particular instances: But, passing that by, it is certain, that they broke most of them, and those both of the first and second table; and it may truly be said,

that, by losing their innocence, and corrupting, defiling, and depraving their nature, and rendering themselves weak, and unable to perform obedience to any command, as they ought, they were virtually guilty of the breach of them all, as the Apostle says, *Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*²: But, more particularly, there were several sins contained in this complicated crime; as,

(1.) A vain curiosity to know more than what was consistent with their present condition, or, at least, a desire of increasing in knowledge in an unlawful way.

(2.) Discontentment with their present condition; though without the least shadow of reason leading to it.

(3.) Pride and ambition to be like the angels, or like God in those things, in which it was unlawful to desire it: It may be, they might desire to be like him in independency, absolute sovereignty, &c. which carries in it downright Atheism, for a creature to desire thus to be like to him.

(4.) There was an instance of profaneness, in supposing that this tree was God's ordinance, for the attaining of knowledge, and accounting that, which was in it self sinful, a means to procure a greater degree of happiness.

(5.) It contained in it unbelief, and a disregard, either to the promise annexed to the covenant given to excite obedience, or the threatening denounced to deter from sin; and, on the other hand, they gave credit to the devil, rather than God.

(6.) There was in it an instance of bold and daring presumption, concluding that all would be well with them, or that they should, notwithstanding, remain happy, though in open rebellion against God, by the violation of his law; concluding, as the serpent suggested, that they should not surely die.

(7.) It was the highest instance of ingratitude, inasmuch as it was committed soon after they had received their being from God, and that honour of having all things in this world put under their feet, and the greatest plenty of provisions, both for their satisfaction and delight, and no tree of the garden prohibited, but only that which they eat of³.

(8.) It was committed against an express warning to the contrary; therefore whatever dispute might arise concerning other things being lawful, or unlawful,

there was no question but that this was a sin, because expressly forbidden by God, and a caution given them to abstain from it.

(9.) If we consider them as endowed with a rectitude of nature, and in particular that great degree of knowledge which God gave them: This must be reckon'd a sin against the greatest light; so that what inadvertency soever there might have been, as to what respects that which first led the way to a sinful compliance: They had a sufficient degree of knowledge to have fenced against the snare, how much soever they pretended themselves to be beguiled and deceived, as an excuse for their sin; and, had they made a right use of their knowledge, they would certainly have avoided it.

(10.) Inasmuch as one of our first parents proved a tempter to the other, and the occasion of his ruin, this contained a notorious instance of that want of conjugal affection and concern for the welfare of each other, which the law of nature, and the relation they stood in to one another, required.

(11.) As our first parents were made after the image of God, this sin contained their casting contempt upon it; for they could not but know that it would despoil them of it. And as eternal blessedness was to be expected if they yielded obedience, this they also contemn'd, and, as every sinner does, they despised their own souls in so doing.

(12.) As *Adam* was a publick person, the federal head of all his posterity, intrusted with the important affair of their happiness, though he knew that his fall would ruin them, together with himself, there was not only in it a breach of trust, but a rendering himself, by this means, the common destroyer of all mankind, which was a greater reproach to him, than his being their common father was an honour.

We shall conclude with a few inferences from what has been said, concerning the fall of our first parents.

1st. If barely the mutability of man's will, without any propensity or inclination to sin in his nature, may endanger, though not necessitate, his fall, especially when left to himself, as the result of God's sovereign will; then how deplorable is the state of fallen man, when left to himself by God in a judicial way, being, at the same time, indisposed for any thing that is good.

² James ii. 10. ³ Gen. ii. 16, 17.

328 *All Mankind fell in Adam's first Transgression.*

2^{dly}. From the action of the devil, in attempting to ruin man, without the least provocation, merely out of malice against God, we may infer the vile and heinous nature of sin, its irreconcilable opposition to God; and also how much they resemble the devil, who endeavour to persuade others to join with them as confederates in iniquity, and thereby to bring them under the same condemnation with themselves; this is contrary to the dictates of human nature, unless consider'd as vile, degenerate, and depraved by sin.

3^{dly}. How dangerous a thing is it to go in the way of temptation, or to parley with it, and not to resist the first motion that is made to turn us aside from our duty? And what need have we daily to pray, as instructed by our Saviour, that God would not, by any occurrence of providence, lead us into temptation!

4^{thly}. We learn, from hence, the progress and great increase of sin: It is like a spreading leprosy, and arises to a great height from small beginnings; so that persons proceed from one degree of wickedness to another, without considering what will be the sad effect and consequence thereof.

QUEST. XXII. *Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?*

ANSW. The covenant being made with Adam, as a publick person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

HAVING shewn, in the fore-going Answer, how our first parents sinned and fell, we are now led to consider, how their fall affected all their posterity, whom they represented; and accordingly it is said, that the covenant was made with Adam, as a federal head, not for himself only, but all his posterity; so that they sinned and fell with him. But, before we enter more particularly on this subject, it may not be improper to enquire, whether this character, of being the head of the covenant, respects only Adam, or both our first parents? I am

sensible there are many who think this covenant was made with Adam, as the head of his posterity, exclusive of Eve; so that, as he did not represent her therein, but his seed, she was not, together with him, the representative of mankind; therefore, though the covenant was made with her, and she was equally obliged to perform the conditions thereof, yet she was only to stand or fall for herself, her concern herein being only personal; and therefore it follows, from hence, that when she fell, being *first in the transgression*, all mankind could not be said to sin and fall in her, as they did in Adam; therefore, if she alone had sinned, she would have perished alone.

And if it be objected hereunto, that she could not then be the mother of innocent children, for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* The reply, which is usually given to this, which is only matter of conjecture, is, that God would have created some other woman, who should have been the mother of a sinless posterity.

The reason why these conclude that the covenant was made only with Adam, is, because we never read expressly, in scripture, of its being made with Eve in behalf of her posterity; and particularly it is said, in Gen. ii. 16, 17. that *the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* And it is observed, that this law was given to him before the woman was created; for it is said, in the following words, *It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* And, in other scriptures, which treat of this matter, we read of the man's being the head of the covenant, but not his wife: Thus the Apostle, in 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. compares him, whom he styles, *The first man*, Adam, as the head of this covenant with Christ, whom he calls, *The second man*, as the head of the covenant of grace; and elsewhere he says, *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*^b; and again, *By one man sin entered into the world, &c.*^c; and, *By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners*^d. It is not said by the disobedience of our first parents, but of one of them, to wit, Adam; therefore, from hence, they conclude, that he only was

^b Ver. 22. ^c Rom. v. 12. ^d Ver. 19.

the head of this covenant, and herein the representative of mankind.

But, though I would not be too peremptory in determining this matter, yet, I think, it may be replied to what has been said in defence thereof; that, though, 'tis true, it is said, in the scripture but now mentioned, that God forbid the man to eat of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, before the woman was created, yet she expressly says, that the prohibition respected them both^e; when she tells the serpent, *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat thereof, lest ye die^f*. Besides, we read, that *Eve* had dominion over the creatures, as well as *Adam*^g: 'tis true, it is said, that *God created man*, &c. but by the word *Man*, both our first parents are intended; for it immediately follows, *And he blessed them*, therefore the woman was not excluded; so that we may apply the Apostle's words, (tho' used with another view) *The man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord^h*, to this particular dispensation of providence. And there seems to be the same reason for one's being constituted the federal head of their posterity, as the other, since they were both designed to be the common parents thereof; the tenor of the covenant seems to be the same with respect to them both, and the tree of life was a seal and pledge of blessings, to be conveyed by both.

But, to proceed to consider the subject-matter of this *Answer*,

I. We shall prove, that *Adam* was a publick person, the head of the covenant, with whom it was made for himself, and all his posterity. When we speak of him, as the head of his posterity, we do not only mean their common parent, for, had there been no other *Idea* contained therein, I cannot see how they could be said to fall in him; for it doth not seem agreeable to the justice of God to punish children for their parents sins, unless they make them their own, at least, not with such a punishment that carries in it a separation from his presence, and a liability to the condemning sentence of the law.

Therefore *Adam* must be consider'd, as constituted their head, in a federal way, by an act of God's sovereign will,

and so must be regarded as their representative, as well as their common parent; which, if it can be proved, then they may be said to fall with him; for the understanding hereof, we must conclude him to have been the head of the world, even as Christ is the Head of his elect; so that, in the same sense as Christ's righteousness becomes theirs, to wit, by imputation, *Adam's* obedience, had he stood, would have been imputed to all his posterity, as his sin is now he is fallen. This is a doctrine founded on pure revelation; and therefore we must have recourse to scripture, to evince the truth thereof. Accordingly,

1. There are several scriptures in which this doctrine is contained; as that in *Rom. v. 14.* where the Apostle speaks concerning our fall in *Adam*, whom he calls, the *figureⁱ of him that was to come*. Now, in what was *Adam* a type of Christ? Not as he was a man, consisting of soul and body; for, in that respect, all that lived before Christ, might as justly be called types of him. Whenever we read of any person, or thing's, being a type in scripture, there are some peculiar circumstances by which they may be distinguished from all other persons, or things, that are not types. Now *Adam* was distinguished from all other persons, more especially as he was the federal head of all his posterity; and that he was so, appears from what the Apostle not only occasionally mentions, but largely insists on, and shews, in what respect this was true; and he particularly observes, that as one conveyed *Death*, the other was the Head, or Prince of *Life*. These respective things, indeed, were directly opposite, therefore the analogy, or resemblance, consisted only in the manner of conveying them; so that as death did not become due to us, in the first instance of our liability to it, for our own actual sin, but the sin of *Adam*; that right we have to eternal life, by justification, is not the result of our own obedience, but Christ's: This is plainly the Apostle's method of reasoning. Now if Christ was, in this respect, a federal Head and Representative of his people, then *Adam*, who was in this, or in nothing, his type, or figure, must be the head of a covenant, in which his posterity were included.

There is another scripture, by which this may be proved, in *1 Cor. xv. 45—49.*

^e The compilers of the LXX seem to have understood the words in this sense, when they render the text, in *Gen. ii. 17.*

^f ἡ δὲ ἄνθρωπος φάσκει ἀπ' αὐτῆς θανάτου ἀποθανεῖν.

^g *Gen. iii. 2, 3.*

^h *Gen. i. 26—28.*

ⁱ *1 Cor. xi. 11.*

^j Τύπος, the Type.

330 *Death, and other penal Evils, consequent on Adam's Sin.*

where the Apostle speaks of the *first and second Adam*; by the latter, he means Christ. Now, why should he be called the *second Man*, who lived so many ages after *Adam*, if he did not design to speak of him, as typified by him, or bearing some resemblance to him? And, in other expressions, he seems to imply as much, and shews, how we derive death from *Adam*, of whom he had been speaking, in the foregoing *Verses*. Accordingly he says, *The first man was of the earth, earthy; and, as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and we have born the image of the earthy*; so that if *Adam* was the root and occasion of all the miseries we endure in this world, arising from his violation of the covenant he was under, it plainly proves, that he was therein the head and representative of all his posterity.

For the farther proof of this, we may take occasion to consider the Apostle's method of reasoning, in the scripture but now refer'd to, *By one man sin enter'd into the world*, that is, by the first man, in whom all have sinned^k; so I would choose to render it, rather than as it is in our translation, since this seems to be the most natural sense of the words^l; and it proves *Adam*, in whom all sinned, to be their head and representative, and also agrees best with the Apostle's general design, or argument, insisted on, and farther illustrated in the following *Verses*.

Again, the Apostle speaks of those penal evils, consequent on *Adam's sin*, which could not have befallen us, had he not been our federal head and representative: Thus, in *Ver. 18. By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*^m. It may be observed, that the Apostle, in this text, uses a word, which we translate *Condemnation*ⁿ; which cannot, with any manner of consistency, be taken in any other than a forensick sense; and therefore he argues, from thence, that we are liable to condemnation, by the offence of *Adam*; which certainly proves the imputation of his offence to us, and consequently he is consider'd therein as our federal head.

^k Rom. v. xii.

^l ἐφ' ὧ.

^m The words are, ὡς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατήκνεια. The word *judgment*, though not in the original, is very justly supplied in our translation, from *Ver. 16.* or else, as the learned *Grotius* observes, the word ἐγέρση might have been supplied; and so the meaning is, *Res processit in condemnationem*. And *g. Capellus* gives a very good sense of the text, when he compares *Adam* as the head, who brought *Death* into the world, with *Christ*, by whom *Life* is obtained. His words are these: *Quemadmodum omnes homines, qui condemnantur, reatum suum contraxerunt, ab una unius hominis offensâ; sic & quotquot vivificantur, absolutionem suam obtinuerunt ab una unius hominis obedientiâ.*

ⁿ The word κατήκνεια is used in scripture, in a forensick sense, in those places of the New Testament, where it is found: Thus *Ver. 16.* of this Chapter, and *Chap. viii. 1.* And accordingly it signifies a judgment unto condemnation; as also do those words, the sense whereof has an affinity to it, in *Rom. viii. 34. τίς ὁ κατακτείνων*; and also ἀκατάκτενος, as in *Acts xvi. 37.* and *Chap. xxii. 25.* So that, according to the construction of the word, though κτείνω signifies *judicium* in general, κατήκνεια signifies *judicium adversus aliquem, or condemnation.*

2. This farther appears, in that all mankind are exposed to many miseries, and to death, which are of a penal nature; therefore they must be consider'd, as the consequence of sin. Now they cannot be the consequence of actual sin, in those, who are miserable and die, as soon as they are born, who have not sinned after the similitude of *Adam's transgression*; therefore this must be the result of his sin, which it could not be, had he not been the federal head of all his posterity.

Object. It is objected to this, that God might, out of his mere sovereignty, ordain, that his creatures should be exposed to some degree of misery; and, if this misery be not consider'd, as the punishment of sin, in infants, then it does not prove the imputation of *Adam's sin* to them; and even their death, consider'd only as a separation of soul and body, may not contain in it a proper *Idea* of punishment, (which consists in the stroke of justice, demanding satisfaction for sin) if it be only reckoned an expedient, or a necessary means for their attaining eternal life. Therefore it doth not follow, that, because we are liable to death, before we have done good or evil, it must necessarily be a punishment due to that sin, which was committed by *Adam*.

Ans. 1. I will not deny but that God might dispense some lesser degrees of natural evil, to a sinless creature, out of his mere sovereignty; neither will I contend with any, who shall say, that he might, without any dishonour to his perfections, send on him an evil, sensibly great, provided it were not only consistent with his love, but attended with those manifestations and displays thereof, which would more than compensate for it, and, at the same time, not have any tendency to prevent the answering the end of his being; yet I may be bold to say, that, from the nature of the thing, God cannot inflict the least degree of punishment on a creature, who is, in all respects, guiltless. If therefore these lesser evils are penal, they are the consequence of *Adam's sin*.

All, except CHRIST, fell in Adam's first Transgression. 331

2. As for death, that must be considered as a penal evil; for, as such, it was first denounced, as a part of the curse, consequent on *Adam's* sin; and the Apostle says, *The wages of sin is death*^o; and elsewhere he speaks of all men, as *dying in Adam*^p, and therefore his sin is imputed to all mankind; and consequently he was their federal head and representative in the covenant that he was under.

II. They, whose federal head and representative *Adam* was, are such as descended from him by ordinary generation. The design of this limitation is to signify, that our Saviour is excepted, and consequently that he did not sin or fall in him, inasmuch as he was born of a Virgin; therefore, though he had the same human nature with all *Adam's* posterity, yet he did not derive it from him, in the same way as they do; and a similitude of nature, or his being a true and proper Man, does not render him a descendant from *Adam*, in the same way as we are. The formation of his human nature was the effect of miraculous, supernatural, creating power; therefore he was no more liable to *Adam's* sin, as being a Man, than a world of men would be, should God create them out of nothing, or out of the dust of the ground, by a mediate creation, which would be no more miraculous, or supernatural, than it was to form the human nature of Christ in the womb of a Virgin. Now, as persons, so formed, would not be concerned in *Adam's* sin, or fall, whatever similitude there might be of nature; even so our Saviour was not concerned therein.

Moreover, that we might understand that he was not included in this federal transaction with *Adam*, the Apostle opposes him, as the *second Man*, the federal Head of his elect, or spiritual seed, to *Adam*, the *first man*, and head of his natural seed, in that scripture before referred to^q. And, as an argument, that his extraordinary and miraculous conception exempted him from any concern in *Adam's* sin and fall; the angel, that gave the first intimation hereof, when he tells the blessed Virgin, his mother, that *the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the highest should overshadow her*; he says, *Therefore that Holy Thing, that shall be born of thee, shall be called, the Son of God*; thereby implies, that, in his first formation, he was holy, and consequently had no concern in the guilt of *Adam's*

sin, because of the manner of his formation, or conception; and this is certainly a better way to account for his being sinless, than to pretend, as the Papists do, that his mother was sinless; which will do no service to their cause, unless they could ascend in a line to our first parents, and so prove, that all our Saviour's progenitors were immaculate, as well as the Virgin, which is more than they pretend to do.

III. It is farther observed, in this *Answer*, that mankind sinned and fell with *Adam* in his *first transgression*, and therefore they had no concern in those sins, which he committed afterwards. This appears from hence, that *Adam*, as soon as he sinned, lost the honour and prerogative, that was conferred upon him, of being the federal head of his posterity, though he was their natural head, or common father; for the covenant being broken, all the evils, that we were liable to, arising from thence, were devolved upon us, and none of the blessings, contained therein, could be conveyed to us that way, since it was impossible for him, after his fall, to perform sinless obedience, which was the condition of the life promised therein. This doth not arise so much from the nature of the covenant, as from the change that there was in man, with whom it was made. The law, or covenant, would have given life, if man could have yielded perfect obedience; but since his fall rendered that impossible, though the obligation thereof, as a law, distinct from a covenant, and the curse, arising from the sanction thereof, remains still in force against fallen man; yet, as a covenant, in which life was promised, it was, from that time, abrogated; and therefore the Apostle speaks of it, as being *weak through the flesh*^r, that is, by reason of *Adam's* transgression, and consequently he ceased, from that time, to be the federal head, or means of conveying life to his posterity; therefore those sins that he committed afterwards, were no more imputed to them, to enhance their condemnation, than his repentance, or good works, were imputed for their justification.

IV. Having considered the first transgression of *Adam*, as imputed to all those who descended from him by ordinary generation, we shall proceed to consider, how this doctrine is opposed, by those who are in the contrary way of thinking.

^o Rom. vi. 23.

^p 1 Cor. xv. 22.

^q 1 Cor. xv. 45.

^r Rom. viii. 3.

332 *The Imputation of Adam's Sin to his Posterity defended.*

Object. 1. It is objected, that what is done by one man, cannot be imputed to another; for this is contrary to the divine perfections, to the law of nature, and the express words of scripture. It is true, that which is done by us, in our own persons, may be imputed to us, whether it be good or evil: Thus it is said, that Phinehas's zeal in executing judgment, by which means the plague was stayed, was counted to him for righteousness^f; so was Abraham's faith^g. Accordingly God approved of these their respective good actions, as what denominated them righteous persons, and placed them to their account, as bestowing on them some rewards accordingly; so, on the other hand, a man's own sin may be imputed to him, and he may be dealt with as an offender: But to impute the sin committed by one person to another, is to suppose that he has committed that sin which was really committed by another; in which case, the Judge of all the earth would not do right.

Answer. When we speak of persons being punished for a crime committed by another, as being imputed to them, we understand the word *Imputation* in a forensic sense, and therefore we do not suppose that here is a wrong judgment passed on persons or things, as though the crime were reckoned to have been committed by them; accordingly we do not say, that we committed that sin, which was more immediately committed by *Adam*. In him it was an actual sin; it is ours, as imputed to us, or as we are punished for it, according to the demerit of the offence, and the tenor of the covenant, in which we were included.

Moreover, it is not contrary to the law of nature, or nations, for the iniquity of some publick persons to be punished in many others, so that whole cities and nations have suffered on their account; and as for scripture-instances hereof, we often read of whole families and nations, suffering for the crimes of those, who had been publick persons, and exemplary in sinning: Thus *Achan* coveted the

wedge of gold, and, for this, he suffer'd not alone; but his sons and his daughters were stoned, and burned with fire, together with himself^h, though we do not expressly read, that they were confederates with him in the crime. And as for the *Amalekites*, who, without provocation, came out against *Israel* in the wilderness, God threatens them, that he would have war with them for this, from generation to generationⁱ; and, in pursuance of this threatening, God, imputing the crime of their forefathers to their posterity, some hundreds of years after, order'd *Saul* to go and utterly destroy them, by slaying both man and woman, infant and suckling^j. And the sin of *Jeroboam* was punished in his posterity, according to the threatening denounced^k; as was also the sin of *Ahab*^l. And the church acknowledges, that it was a righteous dispensation of providence for God to bring upon *Judah* those miseries, which immediately preceeded, and followed their being carried captive, when they say, *Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have born their iniquity*^m; and our Saviour speaks to the same purpose, when he tells the Jews, *That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar*ⁿ. These instances, and others of the like nature, prove that it is no unheard of thing, for one man to suffer for a crime committed by another^o.

But I am sensible the principal thing intended in the objection, when this is supposed to be contrary to scripture, is, that it contradicts the sense of what the prophet says, when he tells the people, that they should not have occasion any more to use this proverb in *Israel*, *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge*; for the soul that sinneth shall die^p; the meaning of which scripture is, that if they were humble and penitent, and did not commit those crimes that their fathers had done, they should not be punished for them, which was a special act of favour, that God would grant

^f Psal. cvi. 30, 31. ^g Rom. iv. 9, 23. ^h Josh. vii. 24, 25. ⁱ Exod. xvii. 16. ^j 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3.
^k 1 Kings xiv. 10, 11. ^l 1 Kings xxi. 21, 22. ^m Lam. v. 7. ⁿ Matt. xxiii. 35.
^o This is not only agreeable to many instances contained in scripture, but it has been acknowledged to be just by the very Heathen, as agreeable to the law of nature and nations. Thus one says: Sometimes a whole city is punished for the wickedness of one man: Thus *Hesiod*, πολλὰκι καὶ ἑμπασα πόλις καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἐπαυρεῖ; and *Horace* says, *Quicquid delirant reges, plebsuntur Achivi*: And one observes, that it was the custom in several cities of *Greece* to inflict the same punishments on the children of tyrants, as their fathers had done on others: *In Græcis civitatibus liberi tyrannorum, suppressis illis, eodem supplicio afficiantur*. Vid. *Cicer*. Epist. ad Brut. XV. & 2. *Curs*. Lib. VI. speaks of a law observed among the *Macedonians*; in which, traitorous conspiracies against the life of the prince were punished, not only in the traitors themselves, but in their near relations, *Qui regi insidiati essent, illi cum cognatis & propinquis suis morte afficerentur*.

^p Ezek. xviii. 2—4.

them on this supposition; and it is as much as to say, that he would not impute their father's sins to them, or suffer them to be carried captive, merely because their fathers had deserved this desolating judgment. But this does not, in all respects, agree with the instance before us; for we are considering *Adam* as the federal head of his posterity, and so *their Fathers* were not to be consider'd in this, and such-like scriptures. Moreover, the objectors will hardly deny, that natural death, and the many evils of this life, are a punishment, in some respects, for the sin of our first parents. Therefore the question is not, whether some degree of punishment may ensue hereupon? but, whether the greatest degree of the punishment of sin in hell, can be said to be the consequence hereof? But this we shall be led more particularly to consider, under a following *Answer* ^f.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, that it is not agreeable to the divine perfections, for God to appoint *Adam* to be the head and representative of all his posterity; so that they must stand, or fall, with respect to their spiritual and eternal concerns in him, inasmuch as this was not done by their own choice and consent, which they were not capable of giving, since they were not existent. The case, say they, is the same, as though a King should appoint a representative-body of men, and give them a power to enact laws, whereby his subjects should be dispossest of their estates and properties, which no one can suppose to be just; whereas if they had chose them themselves, they would have no reason to complain of any injustice that was done them, inasmuch as the laws, made by their representatives, are, in effect, their own laws. Therefore, to apply this to the case before us, had all mankind chose *Adam* to be their representative, or consented to stand or fall in him, there would have been no reason to complain of the dispensation of God's providence, relating hereunto: But, inasmuch as it was otherwise, it does not seem agreeable to the justice of God, to constitute him the head and representative of all his posterity; so that, by his fall, they should be involved in ruin, and eternal perdition.

Answ. There are various methods taken to answer this objection.

1. Some say little more to it than this: That if *Adam* had retained his integrity, we should have accepted of, and rejoiced

in that life, which he would have procured by his standing; there would then have been no complaint, or finding fault, with the divine dispensation, as though it had been unjust; therefore, since he fell, and brought death into the world, it is reasonable that we should submit, and acknowledge, that all the ways of God are equal. But, though we must all allow that submission to the will of God, in whatever he does, is the creature's duty, yet I cannot think this a sufficient answer to the objection, and therefore would not lay much stress upon it, but proceed to consider what may be farther said in answer to it.

2. Others say, that, since *Adam* was the common father, and consequently the most honourable of mankind, (our Saviour only excepted, whom he did not represent) therefore it was fit that he should have this honour confer'd upon him; so that, had all his posterity been existent, and the choice of a representative been wholly refer'd to them, the law of nature would have directed to, and pointed out the man, who ought, in this respect, to have the preference to all others. This answer bids fairer, I confess, to remove the difficulty than the other, especially if it be added, that God might have given *Adam* some advantages of nature, above the rest of mankind, besides that relative one, arising from his being their common father; and therefore that it would have been their interest, as well as their duty, to have chosen him, as being best qualified to perform the work that was devolved upon him.

3. But, since this will not wholly remove the difficulty, it is farther alledged, that God chose him, and therefore we ought to acquiesce in his choice; and, indeed, had all mankind been then existent, supposing them to be in a state of perfect holiness, (and we must not suppose the contrary) then they would have acknowledged the equity of this divine dispensation, otherwise they would have actually sinned, and fallen, in rejecting and complaining of the will of God. But this will not satisfy those who advance the contrary scheme of doctrine, and deny the imputation of *Adam's* sin to his posterity, who still complain of it, as a very severe dispensation, and conclude, that the sovereignty of God is pleaded for against his other perfections; therefore something farther must be added, in answer to the objection.

^f See Quest. XXVII.

334 *Of Sin in general, and Original Sin in particular.*

We freely allow, that it is not equitable (to use the similitude taken from human forms of government) for a King to appoint a representative, who shall have a power committed to him, to take away the properties, or estates of his subjects: But this does not, in many respects, agree with the matter under our present consideration: nevertheless, if we were to suppose, that these subjects had nothing which they could call their own, separate from the will of the Prince, and their properties and estates were not only defended, but given by him, and that upon this tenure, that he reserved to himself a right to dispossess them of them at his pleasure. In this case, he might, without any injustice done them, appoint a representative, by whose conduct they might be forfeited, or retained; and this agrees with our present argument. Accordingly let it be consider'd, that there were some things which *Adam* was possessed of in his state of innocency, and others which he was given to expect, had he stood, which he had no natural right to, separate from the divine will; therefore it follows, from hence, that God might, without doing his posterity any injustice, repose this in the hands of a mutable creature, so that it should be retained or lost for them, according as he stood or fell. And this will appear less exceptionable, when we consider the nature of that guilt, which all mankind were brought under, by *Adam's* sin, and the loss of original righteousness, as the consequence of his fall; which they, who maintain the other side of the question, generally represent, in such a way, as though we supposed that there were no difference between it, and the guilt contracted, together with punishment ensuing on actual sins, how great soever they are: But this will be more particularly consider'd, under a following *Answer**, in which we shall endeavour to take a just estimate of the difference between the guilt of *Adam's* sin, imputed to us, and that of actual sins committed by us.

QUEST. XXIII. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSW. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

QUEST. XXIV. *What is sin?*

ANSW. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

QUEST. XXV. *Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

ANSW. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of *Adam's* first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which is commonly called, *Original Sin*, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

QUEST. XXVI. *How is Original Sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?*

ANSW. Original Sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them, in that way, are conceived and born in sin.

HAVING consider'd the fall of our first parents, and all mankind being so far concern'd therein, as that their sin is imputed to them; we are now led to speak concerning that sin and misery which ensues hereupon. And,

I. This is not called barely a single act of sin, or one particular instance of misery, but a state of sin and misery. Man's being brought into a state of sin, is sometimes called sin's reigning, or having dominion over him; and his being

* See Quest. XXVII.

brought

brought into a state of misery, is called the reign, or dominion of death; so that as, by various steps, we proceed from one degree of sin unto another, our condemnation is gradually enhanced thereby: This is the subject-matter of the first of these *Answers*.

II. We have a brief definition of sin, in which there is something supposed, namely, that there was a law given, and promulgated, as a rule of obedience, to the reasonable creature, without which there could be no sin committed, or guilt contracted; as the Apostle saith, *Where no law is, there is no transgression*^h; or, *Sin is not imputed where there is no law*ⁱ.

And inasmuch as it is observed, that the subjects, bound by this law, are reasonable creatures, this gives us to understand, that though other creatures be the effect of God's power, and the objects of his providence, yet they are not the subjects of moral government: They cannot therefore be under a law, inasmuch as they are not capable of understanding their relation to God, as a Sovereign, or their obligation to obey him; or the meaning of a law, which is the rule thereof. Moreover, we have, in this *Answer*, an account of the formal nature of sin.

1. It is consider'd, either in its negative, or rather privative *Idea*, as containing in it a defect, or want of conformity to the law, a privation of that rectitude of nature, or righteousness, that man had at first, or our not performing that which we are bound, by the law of God, to do; and those particular instances of sin, included herein, are called sins of omission.

2. It is described by its positive *Idea*, and so it is called, a transgression of the law, or doing that which is forbidden by it: Thus it is called, by the Apostle, *The transgression of the law*^k. This we shall not insist on at present, inasmuch as we shall have occasion to enlarge on this *Head*, when we consider the sins forbidden, under each of the *Ten Commandments*, and the various aggravations thereof^l.

III. We are, in the next *Answer*, led to consider the sinfulness of all mankind, as fallen in *Adam*, or Original Sin, as derived to, and discovered in us; and this consists more especially in our being guilty of *Adam's* first sin, our wanting that

righteousness which he was possessed of; and also in the corruption of nature, from whence all actual transgressions proceed.

1. We shall enquire what we are to understand by the guilt of *Adam's* first sin. Having before shewn that his disobedience is imputed to his posterity, that which is the result hereof is, that all the world becomes guilty before God: Guilt is an obligation, or liableness to suffer punishment for an offence committed, in proportion to the aggravations thereof. Now, since this guilt was not contracted by us, but imputed to us, we must consider it, as the same, in all; or not admitting of any degrees; nevertheless, there is a very great difference between that guilt, which is the result of sin imputed to, and that which arises from sin's being committed by us. They, who don't put a just difference between these two, give occasion to many prejudices against this doctrine, and do not sufficiently vindicate the perfections of God, in his judiciary proceedings, in punishing one or the other of them. That we may avoid this inconvenience, let it be consider'd, that original and actual sins differ more especially in two respects.

(1.) The sin of our first parents, how heinous soever it was in them, as being an actual transgression, attended with the highest aggravations, yet it cannot be said to be our actual sin, or committed by an act of our will; therefore, though the imputation thereof to us, as has been before proved, is righteous, yet it has not those circumstances attending it, as tho' it had been committed by us. Therefore,

(2.) The guilt thereof, or the punishment due to it, cannot be so great as the guilt we contract, or the punishment we are liable to for actual sins, which are committed with the approbation and consent of the will, and as they are against some degree of light, and convictions of conscience, and manifold engagements to the contrary: But this does not properly belong to *Adam's* sin, as imputed to us; nor is the punishment due to it the same, as though it had been committed by us in our own persons.

But, that we may not be misunderstood, let it be consider'd, that we are not speaking of the corruption of nature inherent in us. We don't deny, but that the fountain, that sends forth all actual sins, or that sin reigning in the heart, is, in various respects, more aggravated, than many others that are committed, which

^h Rom. iv. 15.

ⁱ Chap. v. 13.

^k 1 John iii. 4.

^l See Vol. II. Quest. CV.—CLI.

336 *Man consider'd as wanting* Original Righteousness.

we call actual transgressions, as the corrupt fountain is worse than the streams, or the root than the branch, or the cause than the effect: But when we consider, as at present we do, *Adam's* sin only, as imputed, and as being antecedent to that corruption of nature, which is the immediate cause of sinful actions; or when we distinguish between Original Sin, as imputed and inherent, we only understand, by the former, that it cannot expose those, who never committed any actual sins, to so great a degree of guilt and punishment, as the sins committed by them are said to expose them to.

And let it be farther observed, that we don't say that there is no punishment due to Original Sin, as imputed to us; for that would be to suppose that there is no guilt attending it, which is contrary to what we have already proved; but all our design, at present, is, to put a just difference between *Adam's* sin, imputed to us, and those that are committed by us. And, indeed, if what we have said, under this *Head*, be not true, the state of infants, dying in infancy, under the guilt of *Adam's* sin, must be equally deplorable with that of the rest of mankind; therefore, when I find some expressing themselves to this purpose, I cannot wonder that others, who deny this doctrine, are offended at it. It is one thing to say, that they are exposed to no punishment at all, which none, that observe the miseries that we are liable to, from our first appearance in the world, to our leaving it, whether sooner or later, can well deny; and another thing to say, that they are exposed to the same punishment for it, as though they had actually committed it; the former we allow; the latter we must take leave to deny, lest we should give occasion to any to think, that the Judge of all does any thing, which carries in it the least appearance of severity and injustice. Thus concerning the guilt of *Adam's* first sin, imputed to us; which leads us to consider the effects thereof. Accordingly,

2. Man is said to want that righteousness which he had at first, which is generally called, Original Righteousness: This is stiled, the *privative* part of Original Sin, as the corruption of the human nature, and its propensity to all sin, is the *positive* part thereof. In considering the former of these, or man's want of Original Righteousness, we may observe,

(1.) That man has not wholly lost God's natural image, which he was possessed of, as an intelligent creature, consisting in his being endowed as such with an understanding, capable of some degree of the knowledge of himself and divine things; and a will, in many respects, free, *viz.* as to what concerns natural things, or some external branches of religion, or things materially good, and in his having executive powers, to act agreeably thereunto; though these are miserably defaced, and come far short of that perfection, which he had in the state in which he was first created. Some have compared this to an old decayed building, which has, by the ruins of time, lost its strength and beauty, though it retains something of the shape and resemblance of what it was before. Thus the powers and faculties of the soul are weakened, but not wholly lost, by the fall: They are like the fruits of the earth, which are shrivel'd and wither'd in winter, and look as though they were dead; or like a man, who has out-lived himself, and has lost the vivacity and sprightliness of his parts, as well as the beauty of his body, which he formerly had.

(2.) Our ability to yield acceptable obedience to God, much more perfect obedience, is wholly lost, as being destitute of a principle of spiritual life and grace, which must, if ever we have it, be implanted in regeneration; so that every one may say with the Apostle, *In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing*^m.

(3.) We are destitute of a right to the heavenly blessedness, and all those privileges, that were promised upon condition of our first parents performing perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant made with them in their state of innocency.

This want of Original Righteousness is the immediate consequence of *Adam's* first sin. By Original Righteousness, we understand, either that freedom from guilt, which man had before he sinned, which exempted him from any liableness to condemnation, and afforded him a plea before God for his retaining the blessings he was possessed of; and, had he persisted longer in his integrity, it would have given him a right to a greater degree of happiness: His perfect obedience was his righteousness, in a forensic sense; and the failure thereof, in our first parents, render'd both them and us destitute of it. But, since this is the same with what is

^m Rom. vii. 18.

express'd in the foregoing words, wherein we are denominated guilty of *Adam's* first sin, we must consider something else, as intended in this expression, when we are said to want that righteousness wherein he was created.

We have before observed, that, by the fall of our first parents, the natural image of God in man was defaced: But now, we are to speak of his supernatural image, as what was wholly lost, and therefore all mankind are, by nature, destitute of a principle of grace; upon which account it may truly be said, as the Apostle does, *There is none righteous; no, not one*ⁿ; and elsewhere man is called, *Atransgressor from the womb*^o, and, by nature, not only *a child of wrath*, but *dead in trespasses and sins*^p; and therefore it is necessary that we be created again to good works, or that a new principle of grace be implanted in regeneration, without which there is no salvation. Our being destitute of this super-natural principle of grace, is distinguished from that propensity to sin, or corruption of nature, which is spoken of in the following words of this *Answer*; and therefore, considering it as thus distinguished, and as called, by some, the *privative* part of Original Sin; we are led to speak of man in his destitute state, deprived of that which was his glory, and tended to his defence against the assaults of temptation; and of those actual transgressions which are the consequence thereof. This excellent endowment man is said to have lost.

Some divines express themselves with a degree of caution, when treating on this subject; and therefore, though they allow that man has lost this righteousness, yet they will hardly own that God took it away, though it were by a judicial act, as supposing that this would argue him to be the author of sin; and I would not blame the least degree of concern express'd to fence against such a consequence, did it really ensue on our asserting it; yet I cannot but conclude, that the holiness of God may be vindicated, though we should assert, that he deprived him of this righteousness, as a punishment of his sin, or denied him that power to perform perfect obedience, which he confer'd on him at first; for there is a vast difference between God's restoring to him his lost power, to perform that which is truly and super-naturally good in all its circumstances; and the infusing habits of

sin into his nature: This, we acknowledge, he could not do, consistently with his holiness, and shall make it farther appear, under a following *Head*. But the other he might do, that is, leave man destitute of a power to walk before him in holiness and righteousness; for, if God had been obliged to have given him this power, then his bestowing it on fallen man, would be rather a debt than a grace, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel. But this leads us to consider the *positive* part of Original Sin; therefore,

3. Man's sinfulness, as fallen, consists in the corruption of his nature, or a propensity and inclination to all evil, which, as it is observed, is commonly called, *Original Sin*, that is, Original Sin inherent, as distinguished from it, as imputed to us, which has been already consider'd. That the nature of man is vitiated, corrupted, and prone to all that is bad, is taken for granted by all; and, indeed, he that denies it, must either be very much unacquainted with himself; or hardly retain the common notices which we have of moral good and evil. This is frequently represented, in scripture, as a plague, defilement, or deadly evil, with which his heart is affected; upon which account 'tis said, that *it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*^q; and that *out of it proceed evil thoughts*, and all other abominations of the most heinous nature^r; unless prevented by the grace of God.

This propensity of nature to sin discovers it self in the first dawn of our reason; so that we no sooner appear to be men, but we give ground to conclude that we are sinners. Accordingly it is said, *The imagination of man's heart is only evil*, and that *from his youth*^s; and he is represented as *estranged from the womb, going astray as soon as he is born, speaking lies*^t; which is, notwithstanding, to be understood with this limitation, that we are prone to sin, as soon as we have any dispositions, or inclinations, to any thing; for it cannot be supposed that man is disposed to commit actual sin before he is capable of acting. Some, indeed, have attempted to prove, that the soul of a child sins as soon as it is united to the body in the womb, and have carried this indefensible conjecture so far, as that they have maintain'd, that actual sin is committed in the womb: But this is not only destitute of all man-

ⁿ Rom. iii. 10.

^o Isai. xlviii. 8.

^p Eph. ii. 1.

^q Jer. xvii. 9.

^r Matt. xv. 19.

^s Gen. vi. 5. compared with Chap. viii. 21.

^t Psal. lviii. 3.

ner of proof, but it seems so very absurd, that, as few will be convinced by it, so it needs no confutation.

As for this propensity to sin, (whenever it may be said to take place) it is certain, that it is not equal in all; and in this it differs from *Adam's* guilt, as imputed to us, and from our want of Original Righteousness, as the immediate consequence thereof; for these corrupt inclinations appear, from universal experience, as well as the concurrent testimony of scripture, to be of an increasing nature; so that some are more obstinate and harden'd in sin than others; and the habits thereof, in many, are compared to the tincture of the *Ethiopian*, or the *Leopard's spots*^u, which no human art can take away. We are, indeed, naturally prone to sin at first; but afterwards the leprosy spreads, and the propensity, or inclination to it, increases by repeated acts, or a course of sin: The Psalmist takes notice of this, in a beautiful climax, or gradation; *They know not, neither will they understand, they walk in darkness*^x.

We shall now take occasion to speak something concerning the rise or origin hereof. This is a difficulty which many have attempted to account for, and explain, though with as little success as any thing that comes within the compass of our enquiries. Some ancient Hereticks^y have thought, that because it could not be from God, who is the author of nothing but what is good, that therefore there are two first causes; one of all good, which is God, and the other of all evil: But this is deservedly exploded, as a most dangerous and absurd notion.

Others seem to assert, that God is the author of it; and, that they may exculpate themselves from making him the author of sin, which is the vilest reproach that can be cast upon him, they add, that he does this in a judicial way, as a punishment for the sin of our first parents, and that it is no reflection on him to suppose, that, as a Judge, he may put this propensity to sin into our nature; so that it is, as it were, concreate with the soul, or derived to us, at the same time that it is formed in, and united to the body: But we cannot, by any means, conclude God to be the author hereof, though it be as a Judge; for that would be to suppose his vindictive justice inconsistent with the spotless purity of his nature. We read, indeed, of God's giving men up to their

own hearts lusts^z, as a punishment for other sins; but never of his producing in them an inclination to sin, though it be under the notion of a punishment: But this having been proved and illustrated, under a foregoing *Answer*, when speaking concerning the providence of God, as conversant about those actions, to which sin is annex'd, in a judicial way, we shall pass it over in this place^a.

The *Pelagians*, and, after them, the *Papists*, and some among the *Remonstrants*, being sensible, that this propensity of nature to sin cannot be denied, have taken such a method to account for it, as makes it a very innocent and harmless thing; and, that it may appear agreeable to the notion which they maintain of the innocency of man by nature, they suppose that the first motions, or inclinations of the soul to sin, or, to use their own expression, the first acts of concupiscence are not sinful; and, to support this opinion, they maintain, that nothing can be deemed a sin, but what is committed with the full bent of the will; and therefore when an unlawful object presents it self, how much soever the mind may be pleased with it, yet there is no sin till there is an actual compliance with it; and, for this, they bring that scripture; *When lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin*^b, that is, the second act of concupiscence, or the compliance with the first suggestions to sin, are only denominated sin; and, as a consequence from this supposition, they pretend that these first acts of concupiscence were not inconsistent with a state of innocency; so that when *Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat*^c. She did not sin till she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and, as a farther consequence deduced from this supposition, they conclude, that that Original Righteousness, which our first parents had, did not consist so much in a perfect freedom from all suggestions to sin, but it was rather a bridle to restrain them from compliance therewith, which, by not making a right use of, they complied with the motions of concupiscence, and so sinned. And, according to this scheme, that propensity of nature to sin, which we have in our childhood, is an harmless and innocent thing, and therefore we may suppose it to be from God, without

^u Jer. xiii. 23.

^x Psal. lxxxii. 5.

^y The Marcionites in the second Century, and the Manichees in the third.

^z Psal. lxxxii. 11, 12.

^a See Pag. 296—298.

^b James i. 15.

^c Gen. iii. 6.

concluding him to be the author of sin. But this is a vile and groundless notion, and such as favours more of *Antinomianism*, than many doctrines that are so called; and, indeed, it is to call that no sin, which is, as it were, the root and spring of all sin, and to make God the author and approver of that, which he cannot but look on with the utmost detestation, as being contrary to the holiness of his nature; to which nothing farther need be said, since the notion carries the black marks of its own infamy in it self.

There are others who oppose the doctrine of Original Sin, and pretend to account for the corruption of nature, by supposing that all men sinned for themselves; which is nothing else but reviving an old opinion taken from the schools of *Plato* and *Pythagoras*, namely, that God created the souls of all men at first, and before they were united to their bodies, at least those that now they have, sinned; and, as a punishment of their crime in that state, they were not only condemn'd to their respective bodies, but to suffer all the miseries which they are exposed to therein; so that the sin, which they committed in these bodies, is nothing else but the farther propagation of that, which had its first rise in the acts of the understanding and will, when they first fell into a state of sin. This is so chimerical an opinion, that I would not have mentioned it, had it not been maintained by some, as an expedient, to account for the corruption of nature, by those who deny Original Sin, and affirm'd with that assurance, as though it were founded in scripture; whereas I cannot think it has the least countenance from it. They first take it for granted, without sufficient ground, that those scriptures, that speak of the pre-existence of Christ in his divine nature, are to be understood concerning the pre-existence of his soul; and from thence they infer, that it is reasonable to suppose, that the souls of other men pre-existed likewise; and they also strain the sense of two or three other scriptures to prove it; as when it is said, that, when God had laid the foundation of the earth, *the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*^d; where, by the *morning stars*, they understand, as others do, the *angels*; and, by the *sons of God*, they suppose, is meant the souls of men, that were then created, and untainted with sin; and, to give farther countenance to this, they

explain what is said in a following *Verse*^e, agreeably thereunto, where, when God had continued the account which he gives of his having created the world, he says, *Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born, or because the number of thy days is great*; they render the words, *Knowest thou that thou wast then born, and that the number of thy days are many*; or they depend upon the translation, which the LXX give of the text, *I know that thou wast then born, for the number of thy days are many*, that is, that thou wast then existent; for, though thou knowest not what thou did'st, from that time, till thou camest into the world, yet the number of thy days are great, that is, thou had'st an existence many ages before. How easy a matter is it for persons to strain the sense of some words of scripture, to serve a purpose, contrary to the general scope and design thereof, if they attempt to give countenance thereby to any doctrine of their own invention!

As for those scriptures, which they bring to prove that the *Jews* were of this opinion, I will not deny the inference from thence, that some of them were, as appears from the report that the disciples gave to our Saviour, when he asked them, *Whom do men say that I am?* They replied, *Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets*^f, that is, they judged, according to the *Pythagorean Hypothesis*, that the soul of *Jeremias*, or *one of the prophets*, dwelt in that body, which he had, and therefore that he was one of them. And there is another scripture, in which our Saviour's disciples, speaking concerning the blind man, asked him, *Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind*^g? *q. d.* Was it for some sin that this man's soul committed, before it enter'd into the body, to which it is united? And was his being born blind a punishment thereof? I say, I will not deny, but that some of the *Jews*, from hence, may be supposed to have given into this fabulous notion, agreeably to the sentiments of the philosophy, which they had been conversant in: But I will not allow that our Saviour's not confuting this absurd opinion, is an intimation, (as the defenders thereof generally conclude it to be) that he reckoned it just; but I rather think, that he pass'd it over, as a vulgar error, not worthy of his confutation. And as for that passage, which they quote, for this purpose, out of the Apocryphal book

^d Job xxxviii. 7.

^e Ver. 21.

^f Matt. xvi. 13, 14.

^g John ix. 2.

of *Wisdom*, which is no proof of this matter from scripture, when one is represented, as saying to this effect, that *because he was good, he came into a body undefiled*; this only proves, that this was the opinion of some of that trifling generation of men. And, when they speak of it, as what has been maintained by some of the *Fathers*, who received the notion from the philosophy above-mentioned, this is also as little to the purpose; and, indeed, all the other arguments that they bring, amount to nothing else but this; that, if the scripture had not given us ground to establish the contrary doctrine, there might have been, at least, a possibility of the truth of this: But to lay this as a foundation, on which they assert the truth thereof, and that with the design above-mentioned, this is nothing else but for men to substitute their own fancies, without sufficient ground, as matters of faith, and build doctrines upon them, as though they were contained in scripture. I pass by other improvements, which they make on this fabulous notion, which still appear to be more romantick^h.

There is another attempt to account for the origin of moral evil, without inferring God to be the author of it, which has formerly been advanced by those who deny the imputation of *Adam's* sin; and these suppose that the soul is render'd polluted with sin, by reason of its translation, or propagation, from the soul of the immediate parent; so that, in like-manner, as the body is subject to hereditary diseases, the soul is defiled with sin, as both one and the other are the consequence of their formation, according to the course of nature, in the likeness of those, from whom they immediately derive their respective beings; and they suppose that a similitude of passions, and natural dispositions in parents and children, is an argument to evince the truth hereof.

But this appears so contrary to the light of nature, and all the principles of philosophy, to suppose, that one spirit can produce another, in a natural way, and so repugnant to the *Ideas* which we have of spirits, as simple beings, or not compounded of parts, as bodies are, that it seems to be almost universally exploded, as being destitute of any tollerable argu-

ment to support it, though it was formerly embraced by some of the *Fathers*ⁱ. And they, who pretend to account for it, by the similitude of one candle's lighting another, and yet the flame remaining the same as it was before, have only made use of an unhappy method of illustration, which comes far short of a conclusive argument to their purpose. And as for the likeness of natural dispositions in children to their parents, that does not, in the least, prove it; since this arises very much from the temperament of the body, or from the prejudices of education. Therefore this method to account for the origin of moral evil, being not much defended at present, we may pass it over, as a groundless conjecture.

As for *Arminius*, and his followers, they have very much insisted on a supposition, which they have advanced, that the universal corruption of human nature arises only from imitation. In answer to which, though I will not deny but that the progress and increase of sin, in particular persons, may be very much owing to the pernicious example of others, with whom they are conversant; yet it seems very absurd to assign this, as the first reason thereof; for it may easily be observed, that this corruption of nature, or disposition to sin, is visible in children, before they are capable of being drawn aside, by the influence of bad examples; and, indeed, their being corrupted thereby, is rather the effect, than the cause of this first propensity that there is in nature to sin; and it would soon appear, that, if they never saw any thing but what is excellent, or worthy to be imitated in those, under whose care they are, they would soon discover themselves, notwithstanding, prone to the contrary vices. And we may as well suppose, that wisdom, or holiness, takes its rise from imitation, in a natural way, as that sin, or folly, does so: But nothing is more common, than for children to be very much degenerate from their parents. And whatever attempts are used to instil principles of virtue into them, 'tis nothing else but striving against the stream of corrupt nature, unless the grace of God interpose, and do that which imitation can never be the cause of.

Therefore we must take some other method to account for this corruption of

^h See a book, supposed to be written in defence hereof, by *Glanvil*, entitled, *Lux Orientalis*.

ⁱ *Tertullian* was of this opinion, [*Vid. ejusd. de Animâ*] and *Augustin*, though he sometimes appears to give into the opinion of the translation of the soul; yet, at other times, he is in great doubt about it, as ready to give it up for an indefensible opinion, *Vid. Aug. de Orig. Anim. & in Gen. ad liter. Lib. X.*

nature, and, at the same time, maintain, that the soul is from God, by immediate creation, which, though it be not so plainly contained in scripture, as other articles of faith are, yet scripture seems not to be wholly silent as to this matter; especially when God says, *Behold, all souls are mine*^k; and elsewhere, which is more expresse to this purpose, God speaks of the *souls that he made*, or created^l; and the Apostle, for this reason, styles him, *The Father of spirits*^m, and that in such a sense, as is opposed to *the fathers of our flesh*; therefore, taking this for granted, the difficulty which will recur upon us, which we are to account for, is; How can the soul, that comes out of God's immediate hand, be the subject of moral evil? To assert, that 'tis created guilty of *Adam's* first sin, or under an obligation to suffer that degree of punishment, which is due to it, is not inconsistent with the divine perfections, as will farther appear, when, under a following *Head*, we consider what this punishment is: But to suppose that 'tis created by God, impure, or with an inclination, or propensity to sin, cannot well be reconciled with the holiness of God.

This is what has been acknowledged by most divines, as one of the greatest difficulties that occur in the whole scheme of divinity. Some, with a becoming and religious modesty, have confessed their inability to account for it, and advise us rather to bewail, and strive against it, than to be too inquisitive about the origin and cause of it. And, indeed, this is far better, than either to darken counsel by words, without knowledge, or to advance what we cannot prove; and I would rather chuse to acquiesce in this humble ignorance thereof, than to assert any thing which contains the least insinuation of God's being the author of it. 'Tis certain, there are many things which, we know to be true, though we cannot, at the same time, account for the manner of their being what they are, and are at a loss to determine their first original, or the natural cause thereof: Thus, though we are sure that the body is united to the soul, which acts by it, yet 'tis very hard to determine by what bands

they are united, or how the soul moves the body, as its instrument in acting. Moreover, we know that the particles of matter are united to one another; but 'tis difficult to determine what is the cause thereof. So if we enquire into the reason of the different colour, or shape of herbs and plants; or why the grass is green, and not white or red; no one would be blamed if he should acknowledge himself to be at a loss to account for these, and other things of the like nature. The same may be said if we should confess that we are at a loss to determine what is the first rise of the propensity of the nature of man to sin; nevertheless, if we keep within the bounds of modesty in our enquiries, and advance nothing contrary to the divine perfections, we may safely, and with some advantage to the doctrine of Original Sin, say something as to this matter, that hereby we may remove the objections that are brought, by some, against it.

Various ways have been taken, as was before observed, to account for the origin of moral evil, which we cannot acquiesce in, by reason of the many absurdities that attend them; therefore it may be more excusable for me to offer my humble thoughts about this matter, in which, I hope, I shall not much deviate from the sentiments of many, who have judiciously and happily maintained this doctrine.

There is, indeed, one conjecture, which I meet with, in a learned and judicious divine, which differs very much from any account which we have of it by any otherⁿ, namely, that the mother, while the child is in the womb, having a sinful thought, impresses it on its soul, whereby it becomes polluted, in the same manner as its body is sometimes marked by the strength of her imagination: But this opinion is so very improbable, that it will hardly gain any proselytes to it; and it only discovers how willing some persons are to solve this difficulty, though in an uncommon method, as being apprehensive that others have not sufficiently done it.

But, that we may account for this matter in the most unexceptionable way, which does not, in the least, infer God

^k Ezek. xviii. 4.

^l Isai. lvii. 16.

^m Heb. xii. 9.

ⁿ Vid. Pictet. Theol. Chr. Lib. V. cap. 7. Absit ut animam creari impuram dicamus, cum nihil impurum e Dei manibus prodire possit. — Dum infans est in utero matris, cum intimè ei jungatur, objecta in ejus cerebrum easdem impressiones efficiunt, ac in matris cerebrum. — Hoc patet ex eo quod contingit mulieribus prægnantibus; cum enim avidè inspicunt aliquid, vel rubro, vel flavo colore, vel palido tinctum, contigit sæpius ut infantes quos in utero gestant, tali colore tincti nascantur. Ita intimè corpus & animam uniri, ut ad motum corporis, certè oriantur in mente cogitationes. — Motus, qui fiunt in cerebro infantum, idem præstare in illis, ac in matribus, nempe eorum animam recens creatam rebus sensibilibus & carnalibus alligare; unde videmus infantum animas omnia ad se & ad suum referre corpus.

to be the author of sin, nor overthrow the doctrine of the imputation of *Adam's* sin to his posterity, we must consider this propensity of nature, or inclination that there is in the souls of men to sin, as a corrupt habit, and therefore that it is not infused by God; and consequently, tho' the soul, in its first creation, is guilty, that is, liable to suffer the punishment due to it, for *Adam's* sin imputed, yet it does not come defiled out of the hands of God; or, as one well expresses it*, "We are not to think that God put Original Sin into mens souls; for how should he punish those souls, which he himself had corrupted? And he adds, that it is a great wickedness to believe that God put into the soul an inclination to sin; tho' 'tis true God creates the souls of men destitute of heavenly gifts, and super-natural light, and that justly, because *Adam* lost those gifts for himself and his posterity."

Another judicious divine[†] expresses himself to this purpose, that, though the soul is created spotless, yet it is destitute of Original Righteousness, as a punishment of *Adam's* first sin; and accordingly he distinguishes between a soul's being pure, so as the soul of *Adam* was when it was first created, that is to say, not only sinless, but having habits, or inclinations in its nature, which inclined it to what was good; and its being created with a propensity, or inclination to evil, which he, with good reason, denies; and, as a *Medium* between both these extremes, in which the truth lies, observes; that the soul is created by God, destitute of Original Righteousness, unable to do what is truly good; and yet, having no positive inclination, or propensity in nature, to what is evil, this is plainly the sense of his words, which I have inserted in the *Margin*.

Now, if it be enquired, how this corrupt habit, or inclination to sin, is contracted? the corruption of nature necessarily ensues on the privation of Original Righteousness. Some have illustrated this by an apt similitude, taken from the traveller's wandering out of his way, or taking a wrong path, as occasioned by the darkness of the night, in which his want of light is the

occasion, though not properly the cause of his wandering. Thus man is destitute of Original Righteousness, or those habits of super-natural grace, which are implanted in regeneration; and what can be the consequence thereof, but that his first actions, as soon as he is capable of doing good or evil, must contain in them nothing less than a sin of omission, or a defect of, and disinclination to, what is good? and, by this means, the soul becomes defiled, or inclined to sin; so that we first suppose it indisposed to what is good, and that this arises from its being destitute of super-natural grace, which it lost by *Adam's* fall, and that God may deny this grace, without supposing him to be the author of sin; for he was not obliged to continue that to *Adam's* posterity, which he forfeited, and lost for them. And that which follows from hence is, that the heart of man, by a continuance in sin, after it is first tinged with it, grows worse and worse, and more inclined to it than before. This I cannot better illustrate, than by comparing it to a drop of poison, injected into the veins of a man, which will, by degrees corrupt the whole mass of blood.

As to what concerns the body, to which the soul was united, as giving occasion to these corrupt habits being contracted thereby, some have compared this to sweet oil's being infected by a musty vessel, into which it is put; so the soul, created good, and put into a corrupt body, receives contagion from thence; and this conjunction of the pure soul with a corrupt body, is a just punishment of *Adam's* sin. Thus a very learned and excellent divine accounts for this matter[‡]; though this similitude does not, indeed, illustrate this matter in every circumstance, inasmuch as that tincture, which is received from a vessel in a physical way, cannot well agree with the corruption of the soul, which is of a moral nature; but yet I would make this use of it, as to observe what daily experience suggests, namely, that the constitution, or temperament of the body, has a very great influence on the soul, and is an occasion of various inclinations to sin, in which it

* See Du Moulin's *Anatomy of Arminianism*, Chap. X. §. 3, 15, 17.

† See Turret. Instit. Theol. Elenct. Tom. I. Loc. 9. §. 12. §. 8, 9. Licet anima sine ulla labe creetur à Deo, non creatur tamen cum iustitiâ originali, qualis anima *Adami*, ad imaginem Dei; sed cum ejus carentiâ in penam primi peccati. Ut hic distinguendum sit inter animam puram, impuram, & non puram. Illa pura dicitur, quæ ornata est habitu sanctitatis; impura, quæ contrarium habitum injustitiæ habet; non pura, quæ licet nullum habeat habitum bonum, nullum tamen habet malum, sed creatur simpliciter cum facultatibus naturalibus; qualis supponitur creari à Deo post lapsum, quia imago Dei amissa semel per peccatum, non potest amplius restitui, nisi regenerationis beneficio per Spiritum Sanctum. Quamvis autem anima creetur à Deo destituta iustitiâ originali; non propterea Deus potest censeri author peccati, quia aliud est impuritatem infundere, aliud puritatem non dare, quæ homo se indignum reddidit in *Adamo*.

‡ See Perkins on the Creed.

The Conveyance of Original Sin by natural Generation. 343

acts, in an objective way. Therefore, when we suppose a soul united to a body, that, according to the frame and constitution of its nature, has a tendency to incline it to sin, and this soul is deprived of those super-natural habits, which would have fenced it against this contagion; what can ensue from hence, but that corruption of nature, whereby men are inclined to what is evil? which inclination increases daily, till men arrive to the most rooted habits, and dispositions to all that is bad, and are, with more difficulty, reclaimed from it. This leads us to consider,

IV. The conveyance of Original Sin, from our first parents to their posterity, by natural generation, or how we are said to be born in sin. It is not the sin of our immediate parents that is imputed to us, for they stand in no other relation, but as natural, and not federal heads of their posterity; therefore the meaning of that *Answer*, in which this doctrine is contained, is only this, that Original Sin is convey'd to us, by our immediate parents, with our being; so that, as we are born men, we are born sinners. Now, that we may consider this in consistency, with what has been before laid down, nothing can be infer'd from hence, but that the guilt of *Adam's* first sin is convey'd to us with our being, and that habitual inclination that we have, which we call a propensity of nature to sin, is the consequence hereof; so that what our Saviour says, is a great truth, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*; or every one that is born of sinful parents, will, as soon as he is capable thereof, be prone to sin. And this leads us to consider,

What is objected against what has been before laid down, in explaining this doctrine, as though it were inconsistent with the sense of several scriptures, which speak of sin, as derived from our immediate parents. For the understanding of which, in general, let it be consider'd, that no sense of any scripture is true, that casts the least reflection on the divine perfections. If we could but prove, that our souls were propagated by our immediate parents, as our bodies are, there would be no difficulty in allowing the sense the objectors give of several scriptures, from whence they attempt to account for the corruption of nature in a different way, since God would not then be the immediate author thereof: But,

supposing the soul to be created by God, we must take some other method to account for the sense of some scriptures, which are brought in opposition to the foregoing explication of the origin of moral evil.

The first scripture, which is generally brought against it, is, in *Psal. li. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*; the meaning of which is, *q. d.* I was conceived, and born guilty of sin, with an inability to do what is good, and in such a state, that actual sin would necessarily ensue, as soon as I was capable of committing it, which would bring with it a propensity to all manner of sin. And that *David* had a sense of guilt, as well as the pollution of nature, is plain, from several *Verses* of this *Psalms*; especially in *Ver. 9, 14.* It is therefore as though he should say, I was a guilty creature, as soon as I was conceived in the womb; and left of God, and so sin has the ascendent over me. I was conceived a sinner by imputation, under the guilt of *Adam's* first sin; and to this I have added, much more guilt, and lately that of blood-guiltiness. So that tho' he is said to have been *shapen in iniquity*, it does not necessarily follow, that his soul was created with infused habits of sin. Whatever the parents are the cause of, with respect to this corruption and pollution, let it be attributed to them; but far be it from us to say, that God is the cause thereof.

Again, 'tis said, in *Job xiv. 4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* It is no strain upon the sense of this text, to suppose, that by *unclean*, he means guilty; and by *cleanness*, innocency, as opposed to it; for, in most places of this book, it is so taken, that is, in a forensick sense; and therefore, why not in this? And, if so, then it is not at all inconsistent with the above-mentioned explication of this doctrine. See *Chap. xi. 4. I am clean in thine eyes*, that is, guiltless; otherwise *Zophar's* reply to him would not have been so just, when he saith, *God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth*; and, in *Chap. xv. 14. What is man that he should be clean? and he, that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?* where to be righteous, seems to be exegetical of being clean; and both of them, being taken in a forensick sense, it agrees well with what *Job* is often reprov'd for, by his friends, namely, boasting too much of his righteousness

344 *All actual Transgressions proceed from Original Sin.*

or cleanness: thus he says, in *Chap. xxxiii. 9. I am clean without transgression; neither is there iniquity in me*, that is, I am not so guilty, as to deserve such a punishment, as he inflicts; *He findeth occasions against me, &c.* Surely, cleanness here is the same with innocence, as opposed to guilt; and, in *Chap. ix. 30. If I wash my self with snow water, and make my hands never so clean*: This plainly implies, that if he should pretend himself guiltless, yet he could not answer the charge which God would bring against him, neither could they *come together in judgment*, Ver. 32. Now, if this be so frequently, if not always the sense of *clean*, in other places of this book, why may not we take the sense of these words, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*, to be this, that a guilty child is born of a guilty parent, which will be accompanied with uncleanness, and it will be prone to sin, as soon as it is capable thereof?

Another scripture, which we bring to prove Original Sin, is in *Gen. vi. 5. Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man, is only evil continually*. Why may not we understand it thus: The imagination of the thoughts are evil, as soon as there are imaginations, or thoughts, tho' not before? And this rather respects the corruption of nature, than the first rise of it; and so does that parallel scripture, in *Gen. viii. 21. The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, q. d.* Sin increases with the exercise of reason.

And, in *Psal. lviii. 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies*. This agrees well enough with what we have said concerning their separation from God, from the womb, from whence arises actual sin; so that they *speaking lies* as soon as they are capable of it.

There is also another scripture, usually brought to prove Original Sin, which is to be understood in a sense, not much unlike that which we but now mentioned, viz. *Isai. xlviii. 8. Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb*. This don't overthrow what we have said; for a person may be a transgressor, as it were, from the womb, and yet the soul not have a propensity to sin implanted in it by God, in its first creation.

Again, in *Gen. v. 3. Adam begat a son in his own likeness*, that is, a fallen creature, involved in guilt, and liable to the curse, like himself; and that would be

like him in actual sin, when capable of it, born in *his image*, as having lost the *divine image*.

Again, in *John iii. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh*. We may understand this, that every one that is born of sinful parents, is a sinner, destitute of the Spirit of God, which is a great truth: But surely our Saviour did not design hereby to signify, that any one is framed by God with a propensity to sin; which is all that we militate against in this *Head*.

V. The last thing to be consider'd is, that all actual transgressions proceed from Original Sin. These are like so many streams, that flow from this fountain of corruption; the one discovers to us what we are by nature; the other, what we are by practice; and both afford us matter for repentance, and great humiliation, in the sight of God: But, since we shall have occasion to enlarge on that part of this subject, which more especially relates to actual transgressions, with their respective aggravations, in some following *Answers*[†], we pass it over at present; and shall conclude this *Head* with some practical inferences from what has been said, concerning the corruption of our nature, as being the spring of all actual transgressions.

1. We ought to put a due difference between the first discoveries there are of this corruption of our nature in our infancy, and that which arises from a course, or progress in sin; the latter has certainly greater aggravations in it than the former, and is like a spark of fire, blown up into a flame. Accordingly, it is our duty, as the Apostle says, to *exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any be harden'd*, that is, lest this corruption of nature be increased, *through the deceitfulness of sin*[†].

2. Let us carefully distinguish between being born innocent, which the *Pelagians* affirm, and we deny, and being born defiled with sin, and so having a propensity of nature to it, as soon as we have a being; or let us more especially take heed that we don't charge this on God, as though he were the author thereof, as well as of our being, as though it were infused by him, and not acquired by us.

3. Since this corruption of nature so early discovers it self, and abides in us, as long as we are in this world, let us take heed that we do not use means to

[†] See Vol. II. Quest. CV.—CLI.

[†] Heb. iii. 13.

increase it, by giving way to presumptuous sins; or endeavour to excite, or draw it forth, either in our selves, or others; for this will occasion abundance of actual transgressions.

Thus having consider'd that guilt which we bring with us into the world, and that corruption of nature, which discovers it self, as soon as we appear to be intelligent creatures, or are capable of any disposition to sin; we proceed to speak concerning the misery and punishment that ensues hereupon.

QUEST. XXVII. *What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?*

ANSW. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so as we are, by nature, children of wrath, bond-slaves to satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

HAVING consider'd the doctrine of Original Sin, as imputed to, and inherent in us, we are now led to speak concerning the miseries that are consequent hereupon, or the punishment that is due to it. And, inasmuch as the former of these is equal in all; and the latter increases, in proportion to that degree of obstinacy, and hardness of heart, which discovers it self in all ages, and conditions of life, and it is attended with greater guilt, as it is more deeply rooted in us, and gains very great strength by actual sin; it is necessary for us to consider the punishment due to Original Sin, as such, and how it differs from a greater degree thereof, which is due to its increasing guilt. The former of these is not distinguished from the latter, by many who treat on this subject; which gives occasion to some, who deny Original Sin, to represent it in the most terrible view, as though there were no difference between the wrath of God, that infants are exposed to, and that which is inflicted on the most obdurate sinner: But, that we may remove prejudices against this doctrine, and set it in a just light, we shall consider the pu-

nishment due to Original Sin, in both these respects.

I. The punishment due to Original Sin, as such, namely, in those who are charged with no other guilt, but that of *Adam's* first sin. This more especially respects those that die in their infancy, before they are capable of making any addition to it. Concerning these, I cannot but conclude with *Augustin*, in his defence of Original Sin against the *Pelagians*, that the punishment thereof is the most mild of any, and cannot be reckon'd so great, as that it might be said of them, that *it had been better for them not to have been born*^u.

That this may farther appear, let it be consider'd, that the punishment due to actual sin, or the corruption of nature increased thereby, is attended with accusations of conscience, inasmuch as the guilt, that is contracted by it, arises from the opposition of the will to God; and the alienation of the affections from him, is oftentimes attended with rebellion, against a great degree of light, and many other aggravations, taken from the engagements which we are under to the contrary, and is persisted in with obstinacy, against all those checks of conscience, and means used to prevent it; and, in proportion to the degree thereof, they, who contract this guilt, are said, as our Saviour speaks of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, to be liable to the *greater damnation*^x; and the prophet *Jeremiah* speaks of some of the greatest opposers of his message, as those who should be destroy'd with *double destruction*^y. This is certainly a greater degree of punishment, than that which is due to Original Sin, as such; and, with respect to these, there are oftentimes many sad instances of the wrath of God breaking in upon the conscience, as he says by the Psalmist, that he would *reprove them, and set their iniquities in order before their eyes*^z; and what our Saviour says elsewhere, concerning the *worm that dieth not*^a, is to be applied to them: But this punishment does not belong to those who have no other guilt, but that of *Adam's* sin imputed to them.

If this can be made appear, as, I hope, we shall be able to do, it may have a tendency to remove some prejudices, which

^u See *Aug. contra Julianum, Lib. V. cap. 8.* Ego non dico, parvulos sine baptismo Christi morientes tantâ penâ esse plectendos; ut eis non nasci potius expediret. Et *ejusd.* de peccat. merit. & remiss. *Lib. I. cap. 16.* Potest proinde rectè dici, parvulos sine baptismo de corpore exeuntes, in damnatione omnium mitissimâ futuros.

^x *Matt. xxiii. 14.*

^y *Jer. xvii. 18.*

^z *Psal. I. 21.*

^a *Mark ix. 44.*

346 *Various Opinions about the Salvation of Infants.*

many entertain against the doctrine of Original Sin, who express themselves with such an air of insult, as though they were opposing a doctrine which is contrary to the dictates of human nature, as well as represents God as exercising the greatest severity against those who are chargeable with no other sin than this; and they generally lay hold on some unwary expressions, contributing very little to the defence of this doctrine, which might as well have been spared; for they are no less exceptionable, though prefaced with an apology, for the want of pity, which such-like unguarded expressions seem to contain in them, when they say, that their milder thoughts, concerning this matter, will do those infants, who are tormented in hell, no good, as their severer ones can do them no prejudice. We may therefore be allowed to make a farther enquiry into this matter, especially when we consider, that those, who die in infancy, will appear, at the last day, to have been a very considerable part of mankind. And some tender parents have had a due concern of spirit about their future state, and would be very glad, were it possible for them, to have some hopes concerning the happiness thereof.

Various have been the conjectures of divines about it. The *Pelagians*, and those who verge towards their scheme, have concluded, that they are all saved, as supposing that they are innocent, and not, in the least, concerned in *Adam's* sin: But this is to set aside the doctrine we are maintaining; and therefore I cannot think their reasoning, in this respect, very conclusive.

Others, who don't deny Original Sin, suppose, notwithstanding, that the guilt thereof is atoned for, by the blood of Christ: This would be a very agreeable notion, could it be proved; and all that I shall say, in answer to it, is, that it wants confirmation. As for those who suppose, with the *Papists*, that the guilt of Original Sin is washed away by baptism, as some of the *Fathers* have also asserted, this has so many absurd consequences attending it, that I need not spend time in opposing it; one of them is, that it makes that, which, at most, is but a sign, or ordinance, for our faith, in which we hope for the grace of regeneration to be the natural means of conferring it, which is contrary to the design of all the ordinances, which God has appointed: But, passing by this,

which will afford little foundation for hope,

Others have concluded, that all the infants of believing parents, dying in infancy, are saved, as supposing that they are interested in the covenant of grace, in which God promises, that he will be a God to believers, and their seed: This would be a very comfortable thought, to those who have hope concerning their own state: But I cannot find that this argument is sufficiently maintain'd; since it seems very evident, that all such-like promises rather respect the external, than the saving blessings of the covenant of grace.

Others therefore conclude, (as many good and pious Christians have done, that when they have been enabled, by an act of faith, in which they have enjoy'd some sensible experience of the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, to give up their infant-*seed* to Christ, whether it be in baptism, or not) from the frame of their own spirit, and the evidence they have had of the power of God, exciting this act of faith, that God will own that grace which he hath enabled them to exercise, and consequently that he has accepted of this solemn act of dedication of them to him, which has given them comfortable and quieting thoughts about the salvation of their infant-*seed*. This is not only an excellent method, used by them, but it seems to be as just a way of reasoning about the salvation of those who die in infancy, as any that is generally made use of; and, it may be, *David* might infer the salvation of his child, when he says, *I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me*^b, from some such method as this. But, since these are uncommon instances of faith, and such as every sincere Christian has not always been found in the exercise of, I would hope, that there are multitudes of infants saved, concerning whom we have no certain ground to determine who they are; and why may not we suppose, that there are many of them, who belong to the election of grace, that are not the seed of believing parents? However, notwithstanding all the pious and kind thoughts, which the conjectures of men suggest, we must be content to leave this, as a secret that belongs to God, and not unto us, to know.

Therefore all that I shall attempt, at present, is, to prove, that if all, who die in their infancy, are not saved, yet their

^b 2 Sam. xii. 23.

condemnation is not like that which is due to actual sin, or those habits thereof, which are contracted by men. And here it must be allowed, pursuant to our former method of reasoning, that, if they are not saved, they have the punishment of loss inflicted on them; for the right to the heavenly blessedness, which *Adam* forfeited and lost, respected not only himself, but all his posterity. Whether they have any farther degree of punishment inflicted on them, or how far they are liable to the punishment of sense, I dare not pretend to determine. I don't care to conclude, with some of the *Remonstrants*, such as *Episcopius*, *Curcellæus*, and others, that they always remain in an infantile state, or, that they have no more *Ideas* in the other world, than they had in this; for this is to suppose what cannot be proved. Besides, if they always remain in this state, this must be supposed, either to be the consequence of nature, and argued from their want of *Ideas*, while they were in this world, or else it must be by a particular dispensation of providence respecting some infants in the next, and not all. To suppose the former, is to suppose that none are saved, since remaining in an infantile state is not salvation; for it is beyond dispute, the soul that is saved, whether it went out of the world an infant, or a man, is exceedingly enlarged, and render'd receptive of the heavenly blessedness. And if, on the other hand, they suppose, that their remaining in this infantile state, is by a particular dispensation of providence, this, was it true, would be a small punishment, indeed, inflicted on them for *Adam's* sin: But we have as little, or less ground to conclude this, than that all infants are saved; and therefore I cannot give into this notion, which, indeed, differs but little from that of the *Papists*, who suppose them, if dying unbaptized, to remain in a state of insensibility; which is no other, than an ungrounded conjecture. And as for the account, which we have, in some of their writings, concerning the place allotted for them, which they call *Limbus Infantium*, and its situation between heaven and hell, this is no better than a theological romance; and it cannot but be reckon'd trifling and ludicrous, and nothing else but an imposing their own fancies, as articles of faith.

I dare not, indeed, allow my self to be too peremptory, or give my thoughts too

great a loose on this subject: But, since it is taken for granted by all, who give into the doctrine of Original Sin, that infants, if not sav'd, are liable to the punishment of loss, which has been before consider'd, as the immediate consequence of the imputation of *Adam's* sin; yet it doth not appear, to me, that they have such a tormenting sense of the greatness of their loss, as others have who were adult, and had received the knowledge of divine things, which infants are not capable of. These, as it is more than probable, carry the *Ideas*, which they had received of divine things, out of the world with them, which infants cannot be said to do; and therefore, if ever they have the knowledge thereof, and consequently of the glory of the heavenly state, it must be by extraordinary revelation. How far they may be led into this matter, by observing the glorious work, which shall be performed, in the most visible manner, in the day of judgment, I pretend not to determine. This, indeed, will give them some apprehensions of the happiness which others are possessed of, and they are excluded from: But even this cannot have so great a tendency to enhance their misery, as when harden'd and presumptuous sinners, who have despised and neglected the means of grace, are said, as our Saviour speaks to the *Jews*, *To see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out*^c, as intimating, that this will, in a judicial way, be a means to enhance their misery; and consequently they cannot but have such a tormenting sense thereof, as what will make their loss appear greater, and so render them more miserable than infants can be, who never had these means of grace in this world.

But, because it is not safe to be too peremptory as to this matter, all that I shall farther observe is, that whatever conceptions they may have of the happiness, which they are not possess'd of, yet they shall not have that part of the punishment of sin, which consists in self-reflection, on the dishonour that they have brought to God, or the various aggravations of sin committed, which is a very great degree of the punishment of sin in hell; and therefore, when the wrath of God is said to break in on the consciences of men, whereby, in a judicial way, sins, before committed, are brought to remembrance, and the means of grace, which they have neglected,

^c Luke xiii. 28.

348 *The Punishment of Original Sin increased by Actual.*

cannot but occasion the greatest distress and misery, this is certainly a punishment that infants cannot be liable to; and, if the condition of the inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Sidon* is represented by our Saviour, as *more tolerable* than that of *Capernaum*, so in proportion the condemnation of infants, who have no other guilt, but that of Original Sin, will be more tolerable than that of the Heathen, inasmuch as they had no natural capacities of doing good or evil. And this is all that I pretend to determine, which amounts to no more than this, that, since punishment must be proportioned to the crime; as they are liable only to the guilt of *Adam's* sin, which is much less than being liable to it, with those other transgressions that proceed from it, therefore their punishment must be less than that of any others. This, I think, may safely be asserted; and, if we proceed no farther in our enquiries about this matter, but confess our ignorance of many things relating to the state and capacity of separate souls, it will be more excusable, than for us to pretend to a greater degree of knowledge, than is consistent with our present state.

II. We shall consider the punishment due to Original Sin, when attended with many actual sins, proceeding from a nature, defiled, and prone to rebel against God. This is greater or less, in proportion to the habits of sin contracted, as will be more particularly consider'd, when we speak of the aggravations of sin, and its desert of punishment^d. We shall therefore, at present, speak to it in the method in which it is laid down in this *Answer*.

1. By the fall of our first parents all mankind lost communion with God. This was enjoy'd at first; for God having made man, with faculties capable of this privilege, designed to converse with him; and, indeed, this was one of the blessings promised in the covenant, which he was under, and it was a kind of prelibation of the heavenly state; therefore it follows, that the fall of our first parents could not but first expose themselves, and then their posterity, to the loss of this privilege; and, indeed, this was the more immediate result of sin committed, and guilt hereby contracted. It is a reflection on the divine perfections, to suppose that God will have communion with sinners, while they remain in a state of rebellion against him; or that he will love and

manifest himself to them, and admit them into his presence, as friends and favourites, unless there be a Mediator, who engages to repair the injury offered to the holiness and justice of God, and secure the glory of his perfections, in making reconciliation for sin, and thereby bringing them into a state of friendship with God: But this privilege man had no right to, or knowledge of, when first he fell, and consequently God and man could not *walk together*, as *not being agreed*^e. God was obliged, in honour, to withdraw from him, and thereby testify his displeasure against sin, as he tells his people, *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you*^f.

This consequence of sin is judicial; and, at the same time, through the corruption of nature, as the result of that enmity against God, which follows on our fallen state, man is farther consider'd, as not desiring to converse with God: His guilt inclined him to fly from him, as a sin-revenging Judge; and his loss of God's super-natural image, consisting in holiness of heart and life, render'd him disinclined, yea, averse to this privilege; so that, as he was separate from the presence of God, he desired to have nothing more to do with him, which is the immediate result of his sinful and fallen state.

2. Man, by his fall, was exposed to the divine displeasure, or to the wrath of God, in which respect, as the Apostle says, we are, *by nature, children of wrath*^g; by which we are not to understand, as some do, who deny the guilt and punishment of Original Sin, that nothing is intended hereby, but that we are inclined to wrath, as signifying those depraved and corrupt passions, whereby we are prone to hate God, and holiness, which is his image in man, which is rather the consequence of Original Sin, and discovers what we are by practice, whereas this text speaks of what we are by nature; and it seems a very great strain and force on the sense of the word, when some understand this mode of speaking, that we are children of wrath only by custom, which, according to the proverbial expression, is a second nature; or, as though it only signified, the temper of their minds, or their behaviour towards one another, as giving way to their passions, as the Apostle says, that *they lived in malice and envy, and hated one*

^d See Vol. II. Quest. CLI. CLII.

^e Amos iii. 3.

^f Isai. lix. 2.

^g Eph. ii. 3.

Sinners liable to GOD's Wrath and Curse, Slaves to Satan. 349

another^h, as though it denoted only the effects of the corruption of nature, not their liableness to the wrath of God due to it; whereas it is plain, that the Apostle makes use of an Hebraism, very frequently occurring in scripture, both in the Old and New Testament; as when a person, that is guilty of a capital crime, and liable to suffer death, is called, *A son of death*; so our Saviour calls Judas, who was liable to perdition, *A son of perdition*ⁱ; so here *children of wrath* are those that were liable to the wrath of God, by which we are to understand that punishment, which is the demerit of sin; not that wrath is a passion in God, as it is in us; but it signifies either his will to punish, or his actual inflicting punishment on them, in proportion to the crimes committed, whereby he designs to glorify his holiness. If this be meant by the punishment due to all mankind, as they come into the world with the guilt of the sin of our first parents, in which respect, guilt denotes a liableness to punishment, and all punishment contains some degree of wrath; I say, if this be the meaning of their being so by nature, I am far from denying it. For the only thing that I have militated against, is, the supposition, that the punishment due to Original Sin imputed, bears an equal proportion to that of guilt contracted, whereby the nature of man, is render'd more depraved by a continuance in sin; and therefore I cannot but acquiesce in that explication given hereof by the learned Beza, who is a most strenuous defender of Original Sin^k, who, when he speaks of men as children of wrath, *by nature*, as all mankind are included herein, understands this, not as referring to the human nature, as created by God, but as corrupted by its compliance with the suggestions of satan; and therefore we suppose, that, as the corruption of nature is daily increased, whatever punishment is due to it, at first, there is, notwithstanding, a greater condemnation, which it is exposed to, as the consequence of sin committed and continued in; and this is described, in scripture, in such a way, as renders it, beyond expression, dreadful, *Who knoweth the power of thine anger; even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath*^l; or, as the prophet says,

Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide, in the fierceness of his anger?^m

3. Man, as fallen, is exposed to the curse of God, which is an external declaration of his hatred of sin, and will to punish it, which we sometimes call the condemning sentence of the law, as the Apostle says, *As many as are of the works of the law, are under a curse, as it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*ⁿ; so that whatever threatnings there are, by which God discovers his infinite hatred of sin, these we are all liable to, as the consequence of our fallen state; and accordingly, as we were, at first, separate from God, the sin of our nature tends, according to the various aggravations thereof, to make the breach the wider, and our condemnation much greater.

4. By the fall, we became bond-slaves to satan: thus 'tis said, that *the devil has the power of death*^o; and sinners are described, as *walking according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*^p; and he is elsewhere described, as *a strong man armed, who keeps the palace, till a stronger than he shall overcome him, and take from him all his armour*^q. The heart of man is the throne in which he reigns, and men are naturally inclined to yield themselves slaves to him, and corrupt nature gives him the greatest advantage against us. None of us can say, as our Saviour did, *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*^r; for we are as ready to comply, as he is to tempt, especially if not prevented by the grace of God, and therefore may well be said to be bond-slaves to him. No age, or condition of life, is exempted from his assaults, and he suits his temptations to our natural tempers, and hereby we are overcome, and more and more enslaved by him; and certainly this must be a state of misery, and that more especially, because such are enemies to Christ, and withdraw themselves from his service, despising his protection, and the rewards he has promised to his faithful servants; and our Saviour says, that *we cannot serve two masters*^s, and so long as we continue bond-slaves to satan, we contract greater guilt, and the dominion of sin increases

^h Tit. iii. 3.

ⁱ John xvii. 12.

^k Vid. Bez. in loc. Ubique ira est, ibi & peccatum; quo sine exceptione involvi totam humanam gentem idem testatur, Rom. i. 18. Sed naturam tamen intellige non quatenus creata est, verum quatenus per Diaboli suggestionem corrupta est à seipsa.

^l Psal. xc. 11.

^m Nah. i. 6.

ⁿ Gal. iii. 10.

^o Heb. ii. 14.

^p Eph. ii. 2.

^q Luke xi. 21, 22.

^r John xiv. 30.

^s Matt. vi. 24.

therewith; so that to be the servants of satan, is to be the servants of sin; and we are herein miserable, in that we serve one who intends nothing but our ruin, and is pleased in all the steps leading to it, and will be as ready to accuse, torment, and make us more miserable in the end, as he is to solicit or desire our service, or as we can be to obey him. Let us therefore use our utmost endeavours, that we may be free from this bondage and servitude; and accordingly let us consider,

(1.) That satan has no right to our service, though he be permitted to rule over the children of disobedience; yet he has no divine grant, or warrant, for it, to render it lawful for him to demand it, or us to comply therewith, and he is no other than an usurper, and declared enemy to the King of heaven; and, though sinners are suffered to give themselves up to him, this is far from being by divine approbation; therefore,

(2.) Let us professedly renounce, groan under, and endeavour, through the grace of God, to withdraw our selves from his service, whenever we are led captive by him, and not be his willing slaves, to obey him with our free consent, or out of choice, and with pleasure; and, in order hereunto,

(3.) Let us lift our selves into Christ's service, put our selves under his protection, and desire his help, against the wiles and fiery darts of the devil.

(4.) Let us improve the proclamation of liberty made in the gospel, and rejoice in it, as the most desirable blessing, *If the Son make you free, then shall ye be free indeed*.*

The last thing observed in this *Answer* is, that, as fallen creatures, we are justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come; by which we are to understand, not only the consequences of Original Sin, imputed to, but inherent in us, and increased by that guilt which we daily contract, which exposes the sinner to punishment in both worlds, in proportion to the aggravations thereof. This we are led to speak to, in the two following *Answers*.

QUEST. XXVIII. *What are the punishments of sin in this world?*

ANSW. The punishments of sin in this world, are either in-

ward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, together with death it self.

QUEST. XXIX. *What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?*

ANSW. The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever.

I. IN the former of these *Answers*, we have an account of those punishments which sin exposes men to in this world: These are distinguished as being either inward or outward, personal or relative; of which, those that are stiled *outward*, which more especially respect our condition in the world, as we are liable to many adverse dispensations of providence therein, are generally reckoned, by sinners, the greatest, as they are most sensible, while they groan under the many evils and miseries which befall them, in their bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, and they end in death, the most formidable of all evils; though, in reality, the punishments of sin, which are stiled *inward*, such as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, &c. how little soever they are regarded by those who fall under them, by reason of that stupidity, which is the natural consequence thereof; yet they are, by far, the greatest, and most dreaded by all, who truly fear God, and see things in a just light, being duly affected with that which would render them most miserable in the end.

Here we shall consider,

First, Those punishments that are called

inward,

* John viii. 36.

inward, which respect either the understanding, will, conscience, or affections. Accordingly,

1. We are said to be exposed to blindness of mind: This the Apostle describes, in a most moving way, when he speaks of the *Gentiles*, as *walking in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darken'd, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*^u. Ignorance and error are defects of the understanding, whereby 'tis not able to find out, nor desirous to enquire after, the way of truth and peace; and accordingly the Apostle says, *The way of peace have they not known*^x; and, by reason hereof, we are naturally inclined to deny those doctrines, which are of the greatest importance, namely, such as more immediately concern the glory of God, and our own salvation. This ignorance is certainly most dangerous, and cannot be exempted from the charge of sin, much more when we are judicially left to it, as a punishment for other sins committed by us.

2. Another punishment of sin, mentioned in this *Answer*, is, strong delusion, which is the consequence of the former. This is taken from the Apostle's words, *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lye*^y; the meaning of which is nothing else but this, that God suffers them, who receive not the love of the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness, to be deluded, by denying them that spiritual and saving illumination, which would have effectually prevented it. Now, that we may consider what the Apostle means by these *strong delusions*, we may observe, that every error, or mistake, in lesser matters of religion, is not intended hereby; for then few, or none, would be exempted from this judgment; but it includes in it a person's entertaining the most abominable absurdities in matters of religion, which are contrary to the divine perfections, and the whole tenor of scripture, and subversive of those truths, which are of the greatest importance; or, when persons pretend to revelations, or are turned away from the truth, by giving credit to the amusements of signs, and lying wonders; with which Antichrist is said to come, *after the working of satan*; and the consequence hereof is, that *they believe a lye*, which they suppose to be confirmed hereby.

Errors, in matters of religion, are sometimes invincible and unavoidable, for want of objective light, or scripture-revelation, as in the *Heathen*, *Mahometans*, and others, who, through the disadvantages and prejudices of education, are estranged from the truth: But even this, in some respects, may be said to be judicial; for, though such do not sin against gospel-light, yet they are guilty of other sins, which justly provoke God to leave them in this state of darkness and ignorance: But the punishment of sin, when God gives men up to this judgment, is more visible in those, who have had the advantages of education, above others, and have had early instructions in the doctrines of the gospel; yet, by degrees, they are turned aside from, and have denied them, and so *forsoaken the guide of their youth*^z. These sometimes call those sentiments about religious matters, which once they received, implicit faith, and please themselves with their new schemes of doctrine, looking, as they call it, with pity, or, I might rather say, disdain, on others, who are not disentangled from their fetters, or have not shook off the prejudices of education, nor arrived to so free and generous a way of thinking, as they pretend to have done: But how much soever they may glory in it, it is a sad instance of God's giving them up, in a judicial way, to the vanity and delusion of their minds; and accordingly they believe that to be a truth, which others can prove to be a lye, and which they themselves once thought so. Now this appears to be a punishment of sin, in that the gospel, which once they profess'd to believe, had not that effect, or tendency, as it ought, to subdue their lusts and corruptions; but they rebelled against the light, and were under the power of presumptuous sins: Their understanding, and talents of reasoning, have been enlarged, and, at the same time, the pride and vanity of their minds hath not been subdued, and mortified, by the grace of God; whereupon, they have been given up first to question, then to deny, and afterwards to oppose, and, in the most profane and invidious manner, to ridicule those sacred and important truths, which they once received. This is a sad instance of the punishment of sin; and the use that I would make of it, may be in the following inferences.

(1.) That we ought not to be content with a bare speculative knowledge of di-

^u Eph. iv. 17, 18.

^x Rom. iii. 17.

^y 2 Thess. ii. 11.

^z Prov. ii. 17.

352 *Of judicial Hardness of Heart, and a reprobate Sense.*

vine truths, but should endeavour to improve them, to promote practical godliness, as they have a tendency to do in all those, who, as the Apostle saith, *have so learned Christ*, as that they have been *taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus*^a.

(2.) We ought not to content our selves with an implicit faith, or believe the doctrines of the gospel, merely because they have been received by wise and good men, in former or later ages, but should be able to render a reason of the faith and hope that is in us, as built upon clear scripture-evidence; so, on the other hand, we must take heed that we do not despise the many testimonies which God's people have given to the truth, or forsake the footsteps of the flock, as though God had left his servants to delusions, or groundless doctrines, and there were no light in the world, or the church, till those, who have studiously endeavour'd to overthrow the faith deliver'd to, and maintain'd by the saints, brought in that which they, with vain boasting, call new light, into it.

(3.) Let us strive against the pride of our understanding, which oftentimes tempts us to disbelieve any doctrine which we cannot fully account for, by our shallow methods of reasoning, as though we were the only men that knew any thing; and, as *Job* says, *Wisdom must die with us*^b.

(4.) If we are in doubt concerning any important truth, let us apply ourselves, by faith and prayer, to Christ, the great Prophet of his church, who has promised his Spirit *to lead his people into all necessary truth*, to establish them in, and to keep them from being turned aside from it, by every *wind of doctrine*, through the management and sophistry of those who *lie in wait to deceive*. And to this we may add, that we ought to bless God for, and to make a right use of the labours of others, who have not only been led into the knowledge of the gospel themselves, but have taken a great deal of pains, and that with good success, to establish the faith of others therein.

(5.) If we have attained to a settled knowledge of the truth, and, more especially, if we have been blessed with a spiritual and practical discerning thereof, let us bless God for it, and endeavour to

improve it to the best purposes, which will be a preservative against this sore judgment of being given up to the blindness of our minds, or strong delusions, and thereby to forsake our first faith.

3. Another punishment of sin, which more especially respects the will, is, hardness of heart, and a reprobate sense, when men are given up to the perverseness and obstinacy of their natures, so that they are fixedly resolved to continue in sin, whatever be the consequence thereof, when they cannot bear reproof for, and refuse to be reclaimed from it, whatever methods are used in order thereunto: Thus the prophet speaks, concerning a people, which had had fore-warnings by sore judgments, and were, at that time, under sad rebukes of providence; yet God says, concerning them, *They will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted*^c: thus the Apostle speaks of some, who *have their consciences seared with a hot iron*^d, and others, who are described, as *sinning wilfully*^e, that is, resolutely, being headstrong, and determined to persist therein; and are as the man described in *Job*, *Who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengthneth himself against the Almighty; he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers*^f: Thus corrupt nature expresses its enmity and opposition to God; and, as sinners are suffer'd to go on in this way, it may well be reckoned a punishment of sin, or an instance of God's judicial hand against them for it. This hardness of heart is sometimes compared to a *stone*^g, or a *rock*^h, or an *adamant*, which is hardly broken with an hammerⁱ, or an *iron sinew*, and their *brow* is said to be as *brass*^k; and sometimes they are compared to a *swift dromedary, traversing her ways; or the wild ass, used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure*^l; and the *bullock, unaccustomed to the yoke*^m; or to the *deaf adder, that stoppeth her ears; that will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely*ⁿ. This stupidity of the heart of man is so great, that it inclines him to go on in a course of rebellion against God, and, at the same time, to conclude all things to be well; whereas, this is the most dangerous symptom, and a visible instance of God's judicial hand, as a punishment of

^a Eph. iv. 21.

xv. 25.

23, 24.

^b Job xii. 2.

^c Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

^m Jer. xxxi. 18.

^e Ezek. iii. 7.

^h Jer. xxiii. 29.

ⁿ Psal. lviii. 4, 5.

^d 1 Tim. iv. 2.

ⁱ Zech. vii. 12.

^e Heb. x. 26.

^k Isai. xlviii. 4.

^f Job

^l Jer. ii.

Of Hardness of Heart, and other Sins leading to it. 353

sin in this life. There are several instances, in which this hardness of heart discovers it self; as,

(1.) When men are not afraid of God's judgments threaten'd, nor regard the warnings given thereof before-hand, or when they refuse to humble themselves under them, as God says to *Pharaoh*; *How long wilt thou refuse to humble thy self before me* °?

(2.) When they stifle, and do not regard those convictions of conscience, which they sometimes have; and, though they know that what they do is sinful, and displeasing to God, yet they break through all those fences, which should have prevented their committing it, as the Apostle speaks of some, *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they, who commit such things, are worthy of death; not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them* p.

(3.) Men may be said to be harden'd in sin, when they do not mourn for, or repent of it, after they have committed it; but, on the other hand, endeavour to conceal, extenuate, and plead for it, rather than forsake it. And here we may take occasion to enquire,

1. What are those sins which more especially lead to this judgment of hardness of heart. These are,

1st. A neglect of ordinances, such as the word preached, as though we counted it an indifferent matter, whether we wait at wisdom's gate, or no, or make a visible profession of subjection to Christ, and desire of communion with him herein; and particularly when we live in the constant neglect of secret prayer: thus the harden'd sinner is described, when 'tis said, *Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God* q.

2^{dly}. Another sin, leading to it, is, a person's delighting in, or associating himself with such companions, as are empty and vain, express an enmity to the power of godliness, and frequently make things sacred, the subject of their wit and ridicule, choosing such for his bosom-friends, who cannot bear to converse about divine things, but rather depreciate, or cast contempt on them; such an one is called, *A companion of fools*, and is opposed to those that *walk with wise men, who shall be wise* r; and there is no method which will have a more direct tendency to harden the heart, or root out any of the remains of serious religion, than this.

3^{dly}. A shunning faithful reproof, or concluding those our enemies, who are, in this respect, our best friends. He that cannot bear to be told of his crimes, by others, will, in a little while, cease to be a reprover to himself, and hereby will be exposed to this judgment of hardness of heart.

4^{thly}. Our venturing on the occasions of sin, or committing it presumptuously, without considering the heinous aggravations thereof, or the danger that will ensue to us thereby; these things will certainly bring on us a very great degree of hardness of heart.

But, since there are some who are afraid of falling under this judgment, and are ready to complain, that the hardness, which they find in their own hearts, is of a judicial nature, this leads us to enquire,

2. What is the difference between that hardness of heart, which believers often complain of, and judicial hardness, which is consider'd in this *Answer*, as a punishment of sin. There is nothing that a believer more complains of, than the hardness and impenitency of his heart, its luke-warmness and stupidity under the ordinances; and there is nothing that he more desires, than to have this redress'd, and is sometimes notwithstanding a degree of fear, lest he should be given up to judicial hardness; and therefore, to prevent discouragements of this nature, let it be consider'd,

(1.) That judicial hardness is very seldom perceived, and never lamented; a broken and a contrite heart is the least thing that such desire: But it is otherwise with believers; for, as it is said of *Hezekiah*, that *he was humbled for the pride of his heart* s; so all they, who have the truth of grace, and none but such are exceedingly grieved for the hardness of their heart, which is an argument that it is not judicial, how much soever it be, in common with every sin, the result of the corruption of nature, and the imperfection of this present state.

(2.) Judicial hardness is perpetual; or, if ever there be any remorse, or relenting, or the soul is distress'd, by reason of its guilt, or the prevalency of sin, it is only at such times when he is under some outward afflictions, or filled with a dread of the wrath of God; and, as this wears off, or abates, his stupidity returns as much, or more, than ever: Thus it was with

° Exod. x. 3.

p Rom. i. 32.

q Job xv. 4.

r Prov. xiii. 20.

s 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.

354 *Of judicial Hardness, a reprobate Sense, and vile Affections.*

Pharaoh, when he was affrighted with the mighty thundering and hail, with which he was plagued, he *sent for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked*^t; but, when the plague was removed, it is said, that he *sinned yet more, and harden'd his heart*. But it is otherwise with a believer; for sometimes, when no adverse dispensations, with respect to his outward circumstances in the world, trouble him, yet he is full of complaints, and greatly afflicted, that his heart is no more affected in holy duties, or inflamed with love to God, or zeal for his glory, or that he cannot delight in him as he would, or obtain a compleat victory over indwelling sin, which is his constant burthen; and, whenever he has a degree of tenderness, or brokenness of heart, under a sense of sin, it is not barely the fear that he has of the wrath of God, as a sin-revenging Judge, or the dreadful consequences of sin committed, that occasion it, but a due sense of that ingratitude and disingenuity, which there is in every act of rebellion against him, who has laid him under such inexpressible obligations to obedience.

(3.) Judicial hardness is attended with a total neglect of all holy duties, more especially those that are secret; but that hardness of heart, which a believer complains of, though it occasion his going on very uncomfortably in duty, yet it rather puts him upon, than drives him from it.

(4.) When a person is judicially harden'd, he makes use of indirect and unwarrantable methods to maintain that false peace, which he thinks himself happy in the enjoyment of; that which he betakes himself to, deserves no better a character than a refuge of lies; and the peace he rejoices in, deserves no better a name than stupidity: But a believer, when complaining of the hardness of his heart, cannot take up with any thing short of Christ, and his righteousness; and it is his presence that gives him peace; and he always desires, that faith may accompany his repentance, that so, whenever he mourns for sin, the comfortable sense of his interest, in him, may afford him a solid and lasting peace, which is vastly different from that stupidity and hardness of heart, which is a punishment of sin.

There is another expression in this

Answer, which denotes little more than a greater degree of judicial hardness, when it is stiled, *A reprobate sense*, or, as the Apostle calls it, *A reprobate mind*^u, which God is said to have given them up to, *who did not like to retain him in their knowledge*; the meaning of which is, that persons, by a course of sin, render their hearts so hard, their wills so obstinate and depraved, as well as their understandings so dark and defiled, that they hardly retain those notices of good and evil, which are enstamp'd on the nature of man, and, at sometimes, have a tendency to check for, and restrain from sin, till they are entirely lost, and extinguished by the prevalency of corrupt nature, and a continued course of presumptuous sins; and, as the result hereof, they extenuate and excuse the greatest abominations: Thus *Ephraim* is represented, as saying, *In all my labours, they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin*^x; whereas God says, in a following *Verse*, that *they provoked him to anger most bitterly*^y. And, after this, they entertain favourable thoughts of the vilest actions, as some are represented doing, *Who call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*^z.

4. The next spiritual judgment, mentioned in this *Answer*, as a punishment of sin, is a person's being given up to *vile affections*. This God is said to have done, to those whom the Apostle describes, as *giving themselves over to the committing of those sins*, which are contrary to nature^a, such as all men generally abhor, who do not abandon themselves to the most notorious crimes: This is a contracting that guilt, which is repugnant to those natural *Ideas* of virtue and vice, which even an unregenerate man, who has not arrived to this degree of impiety, cannot but abhor. These are such as are not to be named among Christians, or thought of, without the utmost regret, and an afflictive sense of the degeneracy of human nature.

5. The last thing mentioned in this *Answer*, in which the inward punishment of sin, in this life, consists, is, *Horror of conscience*. Under the foregoing instances of spiritual judgments, conscience seem'd to be asleep, but now it is awakened, and that by the immediate hand of God, and this is attended with a dread of his wrath falling upon it: Horror and despair are the result hereof; *The arrows of the Al-*

^t Exod. ix. 27.

^u Rom. i. 26.

^x Rom. i. 28.

^y Hos. xii. 8.

^z Ver. 14.

^a Isai. v. 20.

Horror of Conscience, when judicial, and when not. 355

mighty are within him, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against him^b; and, Terrors take hold on him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east-wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand^c.

This differs from those doubts and fears, which are common to believers, inasmuch as it is attended with despair, and a dreadful view of God, as a God to whom vengeance belongeth, and is attended, as the Apostle says, *with a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries^d*. Before this, he took a great deal of pains to stifle convictions of conscience, but now he would fain do it, but cannot; which is a sad instance of the wrath of God pouring forth gall and wormwood into it, when he says, *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee^e*.

But, now we are speaking concerning horror of conscience, we must take heed, lest we give occasion to doubting believers, who are under great distress of soul, through a sense of sin, to apply what has been said, to themselves, for their farther discouragement, and conclude, that this is a judicial act of God, and a certain evidence, that they have not the truth of grace: Therefore we may observe, that there is a difference between that horror of conscience, which we have been describing; and that distress of soul, which believers are often liable to, in three respects.

(1.) The former, under horror of conscience, flee from God, as from an enemy, and desire only to be deliver'd from his wrath, and not from sin, the occasion of it: whereas the believer desires nothing so much, as that his iniquity, which is the occasion of it, may be subdued and forgiven, and that he may have that communion with God, which he is destitute of; and, in order thereunto he constantly desires to draw nigh to him in ordinances, and, if he cannot enjoy him, he mourns after him: Thus the Psalmist complaineth, as one in the utmost degree of distress, *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves^f*; yet he says, *Unto thee have I*

cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee^g.

(2.) The one reproaches God, and entertains unworthy thoughts of him, as though he were severe, cruel, and unjust to him; whereas the other, with an humble and penitent frame of spirit, complains only of himself, acknowledges that there is no unrighteousness with God, and lays all the blame on his own iniquity.

(3.) Horror of conscience, when it is judicial, seldom continues any longer, than while a person is under some outward afflictive dispensation of providence, under which sin is increased, and the removal thereof leaves him as stupid as he was before: whereas it is otherwise with a believer; for the removal of God's afflicting hand, as to outward troubles, will not afford him any remedy against his fears, unless sin be mortified, and God is pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon him, and give him joy and peace in believing.

Secondly, Having consider'd the inward punishments of sin, in this life, we are now to speak something concerning those, which, in this *Answer*, are stiled *outward*, of which some are the immediate consequence of the first entrance of sin into the world, and others are increased by the frequent commission thereof; the former includes in it, the curse of God upon the creature for our sakes, and our liability to death; the latter respects those various other evils that befall us, of which some are personal, and others relative; accordingly, many evils are said to befall us, in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments.

1. The curse of God was denounced against the creatures, immediately after man's apostacy from him: This is, in part, contained in the threatening, *Cursed be the ground for thy sake. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground^h*; and it is very elegantly described by the Apostle, who speaks of *the creature as subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him, who hath subjected the same in hope, and of the whole creation's groaning and travelling in pain together until nowⁱ*; the general scope and design whereof seems to be this, that it retains the visible marks of the curse of God, which followed upon man's sin. This I rather think to be the

sense

^b Job vi. 4.

^c Ver. 13.

^d Chap. xxvii. 20—22.

^e Gen. iii. 17—19.

^f Heb. x. 27.

^g Rom. viii. 20—22.

^h Jer. ii. 19.

ⁱ Psal. lxxxviii. 7.

356 Of the Punishment of Sin, respecting outward Things.

sense thereof, than to suppose, as some do, that *the creature*, here spoken of, is the *Gentile* world, and *the vanity*, which they were subject to, that idolatry which they were universally addicted to; for that does not seem to agree with what the Apostle says, when he supposes that their subjection to this vanity was not *willingly*, neither can it well be called *the bondage of corruption*. But if, on the other hand, we take it for that part of the creation, which was more immediately designed for the use of man, being abused, and so subject to that vanity, which is the consequence of his fall, this agrees very well with its being *not willingly*; for he is speaking here of creatures not endowed with understanding and will, yet abused by those that are, and therefore their subjection to man's vanity, is not so much from themselves, as from man's sin; and then he speaks of the liableness of all these things to corruption, as the world is decaying, and growing towards a dissolution. How far this curse of God, on the creature, extended it self, whether only to this lower world, or to the heavenly bodies themselves, such as the sun, moon, and stars, I pretend not to determine; for I desire not to extend my conjectures beyond the line of scripture, which speaks of *the earth, as cursed for man's sake*; and how far the other parts of nature are liable to corruption, or inclined towards a dissolution, it is hard to say. All that I shall add, on this *Head*, is, that, when this is called a punishment, which is consequent on man's sin, it more especially respects man, who is the only subject of punishment in this world: Inanimate creatures are the matter, in which he is punished, but he alone is the subject thereof.

2. There are other evils that befall us, in which we are more immediately concerned, and these are either personal or relative; and accordingly,

(1.) We are liable to bodily diseases, which are a continual weakness, or a decay of nature, and afterwards to death, which is the dissolution of the frame thereof. All the pains and disorders of nature, whereby our health is impair'd, and our passage, through this world, render'd uneasy, are the consequence of our sinful and fallen state, and, in that respect, are sometimes stiled, a punishment of sin: Thus, when our Saviour healed the man that was sick of the palsy, he intimates, that this sickness was the

consequence of sin, by the mode of expression used, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*^k; and the Psalmist speaks of God's *pardon-ing the iniquities of his people, and healing all their diseases*^l, at the same time; in this respect, they are stiled, in a more large sense, a punishment of sin: But, when they have a mixture of the wrath of God in them, and are not render'd subservient to our good, nor included among those dispensations, which are called, fatherly chastisements, as they are not in those that are in an unjustified state, they are, in a more proper sense, punishments of sin: Thus the *diseases*, that God brought on the *Egyptians*, are reckon'd among the plagues of *Egypt*, and so were a visible instance of the vindictive justice of God. The same thing may be said of death, which is the dissolution of the frame of nature, which is a consequence of sin, in all, and in the most proper sense, a punishment of sin, in those, who are liable not only to the stroke, but the sting of death, and thereby are brought under the power of the second death.

(2.) There are many evils that befall us in our names, when we meet with reproaches and injurious treatment, as to what concerns our character in the world, from those who act as though their tongues were their own, and they were not accountable to God for those slanders and revilings, which they load us with. We are, in this case, very ready to complain of the injustice done us, by their endeavouring to deprive us of that, which is equally valuable with our lives: But we ought to consider, that sin is the cause of all this, and God's suffering them thus to treat us, and thereby to hinder our usefulness in the world, must be reckoned a punishment of sin.

(3.) There are other evils that befall us in our secular concerns, namely, our estates and employments in the world, which are entirely at the disposal of providence, which renders us rich, or poor, succeeds, or blasts, our lawful undertakings. This God may do, out of his mere sovereignty, without giving an account of his matters to any one: But yet, when we meet with nothing but disappointments, or want of success in business, and whatever diligence, or industry, we use, appears to be to no purpose, and adverse providences, like a torrent, sweep away all that we have in the world, and poverty comes upon us, like an armed

^k Matt. ix. 2.

^l Psal. ciii. 3.

man, this is to be reckoned no other than a punishment of sin.

(4.) There are other evils, which we are exposed to, in our relations, by which we understand, the wickedness of those who are nearly related to us, or the steps they take to ruin themselves, and cast a blemish on the whole family, to which they belong. The bonds of nature, and that affection, which is the result thereof, render this very afflictive; and especially when they, who are related to us, attempt any thing against us to our prejudice, this is a circumstance that sharpeneth the edge of the affliction. And, as it is a sin in them, which is contrary to the dictates of nature; so sometimes we may reckon it a punishment, which we are liable to, as the consequence of our sin in general: But, if we have occasion to reflect on our former conversation, as not having filled up every relation with those respective duties, that it engages to; if we have been undutiful to our parents, or unfaithful servants to our masters, or broke the bonds of civil society, by betraying or deserting our friends, and setting aside all those obligations which they have laid us under; this oftentimes exposes us to afflictive evils of the like nature, whereby the affliction we meet with in others, appears to be a punishment of our own sin. Thus concerning the punishment of sin in this life; from whence we may make the following remarks.

1. Whatever evils we are exposed to in this world, we ought to be very earnest with God, that he would not give us up to spiritual judgments. The punishments of sin, which are outward, may be alleviated and sweeten'd with a sense of God's love, and made subservient to our spiritual and eternal advantage: But blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and those other evils, which tend to vitiate and defile the soul, which have in them the formal nature of punishment, these are to be dreaded like hell; and, as we are to be importunate with God to prevent them, so we ought to watch against those sins that lead to them; and therefore let us take heed of being insensible, or stupid, under any afflictive evils, as neglecting to hear the voice of God, who speaks by them, or refusing to receive instruction by correction.

2. Let us not be too much dejected, or sink under those outward afflictive providences, which we are liable to; for,

^m Hab. iii. 2.

though they be the consequence of sin, yet, if we have ground to conclude, by faith, that our sins are forgiven, they are not to be reckoned the stroke of justice, demanding satisfaction, and resolving never to remove its hand from us, till we are consumed thereby; since believers often experience, what the prophet prays for, that God *in wrath remembers mercy*^m.

3. Let us take heed that we don't ascribe afflictive providences to chance, or content our selves with a bare reflection on them, as the common lot of man in this world, who is *born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards*; for this we may do, and not be humbled for that sin, which they are designed to bring to remembrance, as they are to be reckoned a punishment thereof.

4. Let us not murmur, or quarrel with God, as though he dealt hardly with us, in sending afflictive evils; but rather let us bless him, how heavy soever they appear to be, that they are not extrem, but mitigated, and have in them a great mixture of mercy: Thus God says, concerning the evils that he had brought upon *Israel*, that *in measure he would debate with them, who stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east-wind; and by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged*ⁿ; and, by this means, God not only afflicts us less than our iniquities deserve, but brings good to us thereby in the end. If the guilt of sin is taken away, we have ground to conclude, that all these things *shall work together for good*, as he has promised they shall, to those that *love him*. This leads us to consider,

II. The punishment of sin in the world to come. Though the wrath of God be revealed, in many instances, in a very terrible manner, as a punishment of sin in this life, yet there is a punishment unspeakably greater, which sinners are liable to, in the world to come. That this may appear, let us consider the following propositions.

1. That the soul exists after its separation from the body by death, which is evident, from the immateriality thereof, and its being of a different nature from the body: This was known and proved by the light of nature; so that the very Heathen, who had no other light than that to guide them, discover some knowledge of it. But this is more plain from scripture; as when 'tis said, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill*

ⁿ Isa. xxvii. 8, 9.

358 *Man not left to perish in the State of Sin and Misery.*

the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell °.

2. The soul thus existing, though separate from its body, must be supposed to retain those powers and capacities it had, while united to it, which are proper to it, as a spirit, and particularly as the subject of moral government; and those powers and capacities may also be supposed to be in it in a greater degree, when dislodged from the body, which is a great hindrance to it in its actings, as every one sensibly experiences; therefore it follows,

3. That it cannot but be happy, or miserable, in another world; for there is no middle state between these two. This is farther evident, from what was observed in the last *Proposition*, concerning the continuance and increase of its powers and faculties, whereby it is rendered more capable thereof, than it is now.

4. If it goes out of this world, under the weight and guilt of sin upon it, it must retain that guilt, because there is no sacrifice for sin, extending it self to that world; no mediator, no gospel, or means of grace; no promises of, or way to obtain forgiveness; therefore,

5. Wicked men, whose sins are not forgiven in this world, are the subjects of punishment in the other.

6. This punishment cannot be castigatory, or paternal, or consistent with the special love of God, or, for their advantage, as the punishments of the sins of believers are in this world, since it is always expressed as the stroke of vindictive justice, demanding satisfaction for sins committed.

7. Some are happy in a future state, namely, those who are justified, for, *whom he justified, them he also glorified* °. But this is not the privilege of all; therefore they, who are not justified, or whose sins are not pardoned, are the subjects of the punishment of sin in the world to come. This is a very awful subject, and should be duly improved, to awaken our fears, and put us upon using those means, which God has ordained to escape it. But I shall not, in this place, enlarge upon it, since it is particularly insisted on under another *Answer* °; and therefore I shall only observe, that, as sin is objectively infinite, as being against an infinite God, it deserves eternal punishment. And therefore all the punishments inflicted on sinners, in this world, are not proportioned to it; and consequently there are vials of wrath, reserved in store, to be

poured on those, who wilfully and obstinately, persist in their rebellion against God, and the punishment will be agreeable to the nature of the crime; so that as sin is a separation of the heart and affections from God, and contains in it a disinclination to converse with him, as well as unmeetness for it, the punishment thereof will consist in a separation from his comfortable presence, and that is to be separated from the fountain of blessedness, which must render the soul, beyond expression, miserable. This is generally called, a punishment of loss; and there is, besides it, a punishment of sense, expressed by those grievous torments, which are to be endured in soul and body; the soul, in a moral sense, may be said to be capable of pain, as it has an afflictive sensation of those miseries which it endures; and the body is so in a natural sense, which, as it has been a partner with the soul in sinning, must likewise be so in suffering. And this farther appears, inasmuch as the body endures several pains and evils, as punishments of sin in this life, which shall be continued, and increased in another. This is usually expressed by that punishment, which is most terrible, namely, of fire; and the place in which it is inflicted, is hell, and the duration thereof is to eternity: But of these things elsewhere °.

QUEST. XXX. *Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?*

ANSW. God will not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called, the covenant of works; but, of his mere love and mercy, delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called, the covenant of grace.

HITHERTO we have considered man as made upright, and having many blessings in possession, and more in expectation, according to the tenor of

° Matt. x. 28.

° Rom. viii. 30.

° See Quest. LXXXIX.

Of Man's being brought into a State of Salvation. 359

the covenant he was under. We have also observed the first entrance of sin into the world, with all those miseries that attended it; and we are now led to speak of that inestimable display of divine love and grace, which appears in our salvation, which is consider'd more generally in this *Answer*; wherein there is,

I. Something supposed, namely, that if God had left man, in the state into which he brought himself by sin, he would have perished for ever. He was not only in danger of ruin and destruction, but sunk into it: He was like a brand in the fire, that would soon have been consumed, had he not been plucked out of it. His state was not only miserable, but hopeless, inasmuch as he could not think of any expedient how he might recover himself. He was guilty, and no creature could make atonement for him; separated from the comfortable presence of God, whose terrors made him afraid, and whose hand was heavy upon him; neither could he apply himself to any one, who would interpose, or appear in his behalf, whereby he might be restored to the enjoyment of those privileges, which he had forfeited and lost. What tongue can express, or heart be suitably affected with the misery of this condition! And this would have been our deplorable case for ever, had we been left of God in our fallen state: But we have, in the gospel, a door of salvation opened, or glad tidings proclaimed therein, to those who were sunk as low as hell, which is the only spring of hope and comfort, to those who are afflicted with a sense of their sin and misery. Accordingly, it is farther observed,

II. That God will not leave all mankind to perish in that state, but designed to deliver his elect out of it, and bring them into a state of salvation. That God designed not to leave mankind in this miserable condition, appears from the discovery he has made of the way of salvation, which was contained in that promise, which God gave to our first parents, respecting the *seed of the woman*, who was to *break the serpent's head*; or the Saviour's being *manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*; and all the promises contained in the gospel, are, as it were, a farther improvement on it, or a continued declaration of God's purpose relating to the salvation of his people. The work of redemption, wrought

out by Christ, as God incarnate, was a wonderful discovery of this great truth, that God had a design to recover and save lost sinners; and all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, by whom the redemption, purchased by Christ, is applied, and that joy and peace, which they have in believing, which are, as it were, the first fruits of eternal life, these are all a convincing proof, that God determined not to leave man to perish in his fallen state. And to this we may add, that even the malice and rage of satan, and all the endeavours used by him, to defeat this design, and the glorious victory which God enables his people to obtain over him, *who are made more than conquerors, through him that loved them*; these are so many convincing proofs, that God designed not to leave man, in his ruined condition, but to make known to him the way of salvation; first, to make him meet for it, and then to bring him to the possession of it.

Salvation is an inestimable privilege, containing in it all the ingredients of blessedness, such as are adapted to the condition of miserable sinners; and it is a very comprehensive one; which will appear, if we consider what we are hereby delivered from, and what we are possessed of. There is a great variety of blessings contained in the former of these; as, we are saved from sin, namely, from the guilt thereof in justification, and from the dominion thereof in sanctification, and from that bondage which we were liable to, whereby we were in perpetual dread of the wrath of God, desiring to fly from his presence, and naturally inclined to yield our selves subjects and slaves to his greatest enemy; all these we are delivered from. And there are many positive blessings and privileges, which we are made partakers of; such as, grace and peace begun here, and perfected in glory hereafter; and these are not only such as exceed our highest desert, but tend to make us compleatly and eternally happy. Here we are to consider,

i. The subjects of this privilege. Salvation is not extended to all miserable creatures; for angels, who were the first that rebelled against God, were left to perish, without hope of salvation, being reserved for ever in chains under darkness. And as for fallen man, how extensive soever the proclamation of salvation in the gospel is, as it is now preached to all nations, and all who set under the sound thereof, are commanded
and

360 *No moving Cause of Salvation, but the Love and Mercy of God.*

and encouraged to press after it; yet this privilege is applied only to those who were ordained to eternal life. The purpose of God relating hereunto, and the application thereof, are joined together in that golden chain of salvation, *Whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*^r. But this has been more particularly considered elsewhere^r.

2. Here is the only moving cause, or reason, why God bestows this great salvation, or why he has designed to bring any of the sons of men to it, and that is his mere love and mercy. Salvation, whether consider'd in its first rise in God's eternal purpose, or in the execution thereof in the work of conversion and sanctification, as well as in the compleating of it in glorification, is ascribed to the sovereign grace and mercy of God. Are we *chosen in Christ to be holy, or predestinated to the adoption of children by him*? this is said to be *to the praise of the glory of his grace*^r. And the Apostle elsewhere, when resolving this great privilege of salvation, in all the branches of it, namely, regeneration, renovation, and justification, into the same original cause and ground thereof, to wit, the kindness, love, and grace of God, excludes all those works of righteousness which we have done, from being the inducement, or moving cause leading to it^u; so that it was the grace of God that laid the foundation-stone, and it is that that brings the work to perfection.

To make this farther appear, let it be consider'd, that salvation must either be of grace, or of debt; either the result of God's free favour to us, or it must proceed from some obligation, which he is laid under by us, to confer this privilege upon us. Now it is certain, that it cannot take its rise from any obligation that we can lay on him; for whatever difference there is between the best of saints, and the worst of sinners, it is from God, and not from the sinner himself. We have nothing but what *we first received from him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things*^x.

Moreover, this salvation must be confer'd in such a way, as redounds to the glory of him, who is the Author of it, whereby all boasting in the creature is excluded, and therefore it cannot take its rise from any thing done by us; 'tis not

of works lest any man should boast^v. And, indeed, this is contrary to the main design of the gospel, which is, that no flesh should glory in his presence. And the circumstances in which those are, who are said to be the objects of salvation, are such as argue it to be altogether of grace; for, whom did the Son of man come to seek and to save, but them that were lost? or, to whom was the way of salvation discover'd, but to those that were going astray from God, and were neither inclined to return to him, nor apply themselves to any one, who might direct them how to regain his lost favour? And, if they had, it would have been to no purpose; since no creature could make known the way of salvation, any more than apply the blessings contained therein.

Were man only to be consider'd as a creature, and so not properly the object of salvation, which is no other than a lost sinner; or did he expect nothing else but some effects of common goodness, or the blessings of nature, he could not expect them in a way of merit; for that is contrary to the dependance of the creature on God; therefore the blessings of providence must be consider'd, as the result of his free favour. And were man in a sinless state, and able to perform perfect obedience, as he was at first, his ability hereunto must be supposed to be an unmerited favour; and accordingly the obedience performed would be no other than a just debt due to God, and therefore would afford him no plea, from any merit of condignity, for the conferring any privilege, as a reward thereof: This therefore must be the result of the divine favour.

But, when we consider him as a sinner, he is altogether unable to do what is good; and therefore, if salvation were entirely to depend on our performing obedience, so that any failure therein would deprive us of it, we should never attain it; for this obedience would be so imperfect, that God could not, in honour, accept of it. But, alas! fallen man is so far from any disposition, or inclination, to perform obedience, that his heart is naturally averse to it; *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*^z. If therefore such an one is saved, and that in such a way, that God is pleased to love him, and manifest himself to him,

^r Rom. viii. 30.

^r See Pag. 227, 228.

^v Eph. i. 4—6.

^u Tit. iii. 4—7.

^x Rom. xi.

35, 36.

^y Eph. ii. 9.

^z Rom. viii. 7.

The Covenant of Grace opposed to that of Innocency. 361

it must be a wonderful instance of divine grace, which no one, who has experienced it, can think on, but with admiration, especially when considering how discriminating it is; as one of Christ's disciples said unto him, *How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?*^a

3. Having consider'd salvation, as design'd for all the elect, we proceed to consider the means of their attaining it; or their being brought into a state of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace. As salvation is ascribed to the grace of God; so it is an instance of condescending goodness, that our faith, relating hereunto, should be confirmed by such a dispensation, as is generally stiled a covenant. Thus *David*, speaking concerning it, says, *He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire*^b. This covenant, as to what respects the parties concerned therein, and the manner in which the grace of God is display'd in it, together with the various dispensations, or administrations thereof, is particularly consider'd under the five following *Answers*. The only thing, that remains to be insisted on in this, is its being called the *Second Covenant*, as opposed to the covenant of works, which is stiled the *First*. The covenant of works has been consider'd under a foregoing *Answer*^c. All that I shall observe, concerning it, at present, is, that though life was promised therein, as including all those blessings, which were suited to the state of man in innocency, yet there was no promise of salvation in it, which is the restoring of forfeited blessings, or a recovery from a state of death and ruin. In this respect, the covenant of grace is opposed to it.

Again, though *Adam* was the head of that covenant, whose obedience, or apostacy, would convey life or death to all his posterity, whom he represented, yet he stood not in the relation of a mediator, or surety, to them, for that was inconsistent with the dispensation he was under, and is applicable to no other covenant, than that which we are considering, as thus opposed to it.

Moreover, perfect obedience was demanded, as a condition of man's attaining life, and this he was thoroughly furnished to perform; whereas, in the co-

venant of grace, if God should insist on our performing perfect obedience, the condition would be, in its own nature, impossible, and therefore we should hereby rather be excluded from, than brought into a state of salvation; and whatever obedience we are engaged to perform, as expectants of salvation, this is entirely owing to the grace of God, by which *we are what we are*, as well as attain to the blessings we hope for: Herein the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, differ.

The next thing that we are to observe is, that the covenant of grace is called the *Second Covenant*; and this leads us to enquire, whether we have any ground, from scripture, to conclude, that there are more covenants than these two; or, at least, whether what we call the *Second Covenant*, or the covenant of grace, may not be subdivided into two covenants; since the Apostle seems to speak of two covenants made with fallen man, *viz.* one that was made with the *Israelites*, given from mount *Sinai*, which was designed to continue no longer than that dispensation they were under, lasted; and the other is, that which the church has been under ever since the gospel-dispensation was erected, which is to continue to the end of the world. These are described by their respective properties, in an allegorical way, and illustrated by a similitude, taken from two mountains, *Sinai* and *Sion*, and two persons, mentioned in scripture, *Agar* and *Sarah*: The former of these is said *to gender unto bondage*; the latter brings those, who are under it, into a state of liberty^d; and one of these covenants is said to be *better* than the other, and particularly called a *new covenant*, the other is represented as *decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away*^e.

Moreover, the Apostle seems to speak of more covenants than one, made with the *Jewish church*; for he says, that *to them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, &c.*^f; and elsewhere, speaking concerning the *Gentiles*, as *aliens from the common-wealth of Israel*, he adds, that *they were also strangers from the covenants of promise*^g; which seems to argue, that there were more than three covenants made with man; one with innocent man; the other, the gospel-covenant, which we are under; and, besides these, there were other covenants, made with *Israel*, which seems to carry in it

^a John xiv. 22.

^b 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

^c See Quest. XX. Pag. 311. & seq.

^d Gal. iv. 24. & seq.

^e Heb. viii. 6, 8, 13.

^f Rom. ix. 4.

^g Eph. ii. 12.

362 *Various Periods of the same Covenant of Grace.*

the appearance of an objection, to what was before observed, that there was, in reality, but two covenants, and that whenever we read of any covenant in scripture, it is reducible to one of them.

This may, without much difficulty, be accounted for, consistently therewith, if we consider the sense of those scriptures above-mentioned.

First, As to those scriptures, that seem to speak of two distinct covenants, made with fallen man, to wit, one with the *Israelites*; the other, that which we are under, they really intend nothing more than two different dispensations of the covenant of grace, in which sense we are to understand the Apostle, when he speaks of the two covenants, the *Old* and the *New*, the *First* and the *Second*: The covenant is the same, though the dispensation of the grace of God therein, or the way of revealing it to men, differs. But this will be more particularly insisted on, in those following *Answers*, which respect the various administrations of grace, under the Old and New Testament; therefore we proceed,

Secondly, To enquire into the meaning of those other scriptures, before mentioned, which seem to speak of more covenants than one, which the *Jewish* nation was under. By the covenants there mentioned, the Apostle seems to refer to some different times, or periods of the church, before our Saviour's incarnation, of which some divines take notice of *four*; in each of which, there was something new and distinct from the rest, in the dispensation of divine providence towards the church. The *first* of these took its rise from the promise which God gave to man, as soon as he fell, relating to that salvation, which was to be brought about, in its proper time, by the seed of the woman. The *second* period of the church began after the flood, when God is said to have revealed his covenant to *Noah*, which he *established between him and all flesh upon the earth*^h. A *third* remarkable period, or change of affairs in the church, was, when God called *Abraham* out of an idolatrous country, to *sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange country*, at which time he established his covenant with him, promising to be *a God to him, and his seed*, and instituting *circumcision, as a token thereof*ⁱ; upon which occasion, this particular dispensation thereof is called, *The covenant of circumcision*^k. The *fourth*

and last dispensation, or period, which more especially respected the seed of *Abraham*, as increased to a great nation, is what we read of, soon after they were deliver'd from the *Egyptian* bondage, when God was pleased to separate that nation, as a peculiar people to himself, and sent *Moses* from mount *Sinai*, where he appear'd to them, to demand their explicit consent to be his people; upon which occasion, when they had promised, that all that *the Lord had said, they would do, and be obedient*, and a publick and solemn *sacrifice* was offered, and the people *sprinkled with the blood thereof*, it is said, *They saw God, and did eat and drink*, as a farther sign and ratification of this dispensation of the covenant^l; and afterwards many statutes and ordinances were given them, containing those laws, which God required of them, as a covenant-people; and this continued till the gospel-dispensation, which succeeded it, was erected. This seems to be the meaning of what the Apostle speaks, in the scriptures before cited, when he says, that the church of the *Jews* had *the Covenants*, as intending nothing else thereby, but the dispensation of the covenant of grace, as subdivided into several periods, during the various ages of the church, from the fall of *Adam*, to our recovery by Christ. Therefore, tho' those dispensations were various, yet whatever God has transacted with man, in a federal way, may be consider'd under two general *Heads*; the first called, the covenant of works; the other, the covenant of grace; the latter of which is to be farther consider'd, under the following *Answers*.

QUEST. XXXI. *With whom was the covenant of grace made?*

ANSW. The covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the second *Adam*, and in him, with all the elect, as his seed.

AS the covenant of grace is opposed to that which was made with *Adam*, as the head of mankind, so it is consider'd, in this *Answer*, as made with the second *Adam*, and, in him, with all his elect, who are described, by the Psalmist, as a *seed that should serve him, which should be accounted to the Lord for a generation*^m;

^h Gen. ix. 17.
xxii. 30.

ⁱ Gen. xvii. 7—11.

^k Acts vii. 8.

^l Exod. xxiv. 1—11.

^m Psal.

How the Word Covenant is to be understood in Scripture. 363

and the prophet *Isaiab*, speaking of them, says, *He shall see his seed*ⁿ. In explaining this *Answer*, we shall consider,

I. What we are to understand by a covenant in general, and more particularly how it is to be understood, as used in scripture. The word, commonly used in the Old Testament, to signify a *Covenant*^o, being taken in several senses, may be better understood, by the application thereof, in those places, where we find it, than by enquiring into the sense of the root, from whence it is derived. Sometimes, indeed, it signifies such a compact, between two parties, as agrees with our common acceptation of the word, especially when applied to transactions between man and man; as in the covenant between *Abraham*, and those neighbouring princes, that were *confederate with him*, where the same word is used, in *Gen. xiv. 13.* and in the covenant between *Isaac* and *Abimelech*, mentioned in *Gen. xxvi. 28, 29.* and in that between *Jonathan* and *David*, in *1 Sam. xx. 16, 17.* in all which instances there was mutual stipulation and re-stipulation, as there is in human covenants; and, for this reason, some apply those *Ideas* to the word, when it is used to signify God's entering into covenant with man.

But there is another acceptation thereof, when God is represented as making a covenant with man, which is more agreeable to the divine perfections, and that infinite distance there is between him and us; therefore we find, in several places of scripture, that when God is said to make a covenant, there is an intimation of some blessings, which he would bestow upon his people, without any *Idea* of stipulation, or re-stipulation, annexed to it: Thus we read, in *Jer. xxxiii. 20.* of God's *covenant of the day and night*, or that there should be day and night in their season; and, in *Gen. ix. 9, 10, 11.* of God's establishing his covenant with Noah, and his seed, and every living creature, that all flesh should not be cut off any more, by the waters of a flood. And, in *Ezek. xxxiv. 25.* when God promises to cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, and that his people should dwell safely in the wilderness, and that he would confer several other blessings upon them, mentioned in the following *Verses*; this is called, his making with them a *covenant of peace*. And, when God promises spiri-

tual blessings to his people, in *Isai. lix. 21.* he says, *This is my covenant with them; my Spirit that is upon thee, and the words that I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever.*

Moreover, sometimes the *Hebrew* word, which we translate *Covenant*, is used to signify a *Statute*, or *Ordinance*, which God has established, or appointed, in his church: Thus, in *Numb. xviii. 19.* when God ordain'd, that *Aaron* and his sons should have the heave-offerings of the holy things, he says, *These have I given thee, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, to be a statute for ever*; and adds, in the words immediately following, *It is a covenant of salt for ever, before the Lord.*

And as for the word used in the New Testament^p, by which the *LXX* generally translate the *Hebrew* word, before mentioned, in the Old Testament, this signifies the same thing; so that both the words imply little more than a divine establishment, or ordinance, in which God gives his people ground to expect promised blessings, in such a way, as redounds most to his own glory; and, at the same time, they, who are expectants thereof, are not exempted from an obligation to perform those duties, which this grace obliges them to, and which will be an evidence of their right to them.

And I cannot but farther observe, that, among other acceptations of the word, especially as used by the Apostle, in his epistle to the *Hebrews*, in *Chap. ix. 15—18.* it signifies a *Testament*; which word some, who treat on this subject, rather choose to make use of, than to call it a covenant, being warranted so to do, by the sense given of it in this scripture; and their reason for it is, not only because, as the Apostle says, it was *confirmed by the death of the Testator*; but because they conclude, that this more conduces to the advancing the grace of God, in this dispensation, than to stile it a *Covenant*, in that sense, in which the word is commonly used, when applied to other matters: But I would rather acquiesce in that medium, betwixt both extremes, which some have given into, who join both the *Ideas* of a covenant and a testament together^q, and stile it, in some respects, a covenant, and, in others, a testament. If it be called a covenant, they abstract from the *Ideas*

ⁿ *Isai. liii. 10.*

^o ברית

^p Διαθήκη.

^q These stile it, *Testamento-Foedus*, or *Foedus Testamentarium*, or *Testamentum Federale*.

thereof,

364 GOD's Covenant very different from human Covenants.

thereof, some things, that are contained in the sense of the word, as applied to human contracts, and add to it other things, contained in a testament; such as, the giving or bequeathing certain legacies, as an act of favour, to those who are denominated, from thence, legatees, interested in those gifts that are thus disposed of by the will of the testator. Or if, on the other hand, we call it a testament, it seems very agreeable, to this dispensation, to join with it the *Idea* of a covenant, more especially as to what contains the concern of Christ herein, as the Head thereof, or the Person in whom all the benefits, contained in this testament, are first reposed, as they are purchased by his blood, and, as the consequence thereof, applied by his Spirit. And this agrees very well with the subject-matter of this *Answer*, in which the covenant is said to be made with him, and with the elect in him, as well as with what is contained in that *Answer* immediately following, in which the covenant of grace is described in such a way, as they describe it, who say that it was made with believers. This is necessary to be premised, that we may not, in our explication of this doctrine, advance any thing which is inconsistent with its being a covenant of grace; and, that we may farther consider this matter, we shall proceed to shew,

II. What there is in the *Idea* of a covenant, as we generally understand the word, when applied to signify a contract between man and man. In this case, there are two parties, one of which is said to stipulate, or enter into a covenant with the other, in which he makes a proposal, that he will confer some favours on him, upon certain conditions, provided he will oblige himself to fulfil them; and the other party complies with the proposal made, and, in expectation of those advantages, consents to fulfil the conditions enjoined, and accordingly is said to re-stipulate; as when a person engages another to be his servant, and to give him a reward for his service; and the other consents to serve him, in expectation of the wages which he engages to give him; in this case, each party is supposed to be possessed of something, which the other has no right to, but by virtue of this contract made between them: Thus the servant has no right to the rewards, which his master promises, nor has the master any right to his service, but by mutual consent. Each party also proposes some

advantage to himself, and therefore, when they enter into this agreement, they are supposed, in some respects, to stand on a level with each other. No one will enter into a covenant with another, for the performing that which he had an antecedent right to; nor will any one engage to perform any service, as a condition of his receiving those benefits, which he had a right to, without any such condition enjoined on him. Moreover, when two parties are said to enter into covenant with one another, they are supposed, in some respects, to stand in need of some things, which they had before no right to; one party needs the reward proposed; the other, the service which he enjoins, as a condition of his bestowing it. These things are generally supposed, and contained in contracts between man and man.

III. When God is said to enter into covenant with man, what method soever we take to explain this federal transaction, we must take heed that we do not include in it any thing that is inconsistent with his infinite sovereignty, or argues him to be dependent on his creatures, as though he had not an antecedent right to their obedience, which he demands in this covenant, or it were left to man's arbitrary will, whether he would perform it or no. Though men may be said to have some things in their own power, so that one has a right to that, which another has no right to, but by his own consent, and are entirely left to their liberty, whether they will consign over that right, which they had to it, to another, who could not otherwise lay claim to it; yet this is by no means to be applied to man, when considered as having to do with the great God. The best of creatures have no right to any thing, separate from his arbitrary will; and therefore, though stipulation and re-stipulation are proper words, when applied to a man's covenant, they ought not to be made use of, when we explain this covenant between God and man.

IV. Though the parties concerned in the covenant, as explained in this *Answer*, to wit, God the Father, and Christ the Head of his elect, are both divine Persons, so that one of them is not infinitely below the other, as man is below God; and therefore it is more properly called a covenant, in this respect, than that which God is said to enter into with man, (and, if stipulation and re-stipulation is, in any respect,

The Covenant between Father and Son explain'd and prov'd 365

respect, applicable to the divine dispensation, it may be applied in this case:) Nevertheless, there are some things, which are implied in the *Idea* of a covenant between man and man, that cannot, consistently with the glory of these divine Persons, be contained in this federal transaction between them; particularly, as he that enters into covenant with another, proposes some advantage to himself hereby: Thus a master, when he stipulates with one to be his servant, is supposed as much to need his service, as the servant does the wages that he promises to give him; there is a kind of mutual advantage arising from thence: But, in the covenant of grace, whether God be said to make it with man, or with Christ, as the Head of his elect, the advantage that arises from thence is our's, and not God's. In this respect, what was done by Christ, made no addition to the essential glory of God, or the divine blessedness, any more than man can be said, in that respect, to be profitable to him: Thus some understand those words of the Psalmist, as spoken by our Saviour, when he says, *My goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints which are in the earth*^r; and this agrees very well with some other things, contained in the same Psalm, which are expressly, in other parts of scripture, applied to him; and, if so, then the meaning is, that whatever glory God the Father designed to demonstrate by this federal transaction with his Son; yet he did not, as men do, by entering into covenant with one another, propose to receive any addition of glory from it, as though he were really to be profited thereby.

Again, when men enter into covenant with one another, they are supposed to have different wills, and accordingly they might refuse to enter into those engagements, which they bring themselves under, as well as comply with them; the obligation, on both sides, is founded in mutual consent, and that is supposed to be arbitrary: But, when we consider the eternal compact between the Father and the Son, we must conclude, that though they be distinct as to their personality; yet, having the same essential perfections, the will of the Father, and of the Son, cannot but be the same. Therefore when many, who explain this doctrine, represent one as proposing, the other as complying, with the proposal; one demanding, the other expecting, and each de-

pending on mutual promises, made by one to the other, this, 'tis true, seems to be founded on some scripture-expressions to the same purpose, wherein the Holy Ghost is pleased to condescend to make use of such modes of speaking, which are agreeable to the nature of human covenants, as he does in various other instances; nevertheless, we must not so far strain the sense of words, as to infer, from hence, any thing that is inconsistent with the divine glory of the Father and the Son. And to this we may add, that no act of obedience can be perform'd by a divine Person, in the same nature, as there cannot be an act of subjection in that nature; which is properly divine; and consequently when we consider Christ, in this respect, as entering into covenant, and engaging to perform those conditions, which were insisted on therein, these are supposed to be performed by him, as Mediator, or God incarnate, in his human nature; and, in this respect, he is the Head of the covenant, which is made with him, and, in him, with the elect. Therefore we must suppose, when we speak of a covenant between the Father and the Son, that, whatever be the will of the Father, the same is the Son's will; and whatever conditions the Son consented to perform, as stipulated in this covenant, it was in his human nature that the work was to be done; and therefore it is well observed, in some following *Answers*, that he, who is the Head or Mediator of this covenant, is, as it was absolutely necessary for him to be, both God and man, in one Person. But of this more hereafter.

V. There are several expressions used, in scripture, that give us sufficient ground to conclude, that there was an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, relating to the salvation of his elect, which, if explain'd agreeably to the divine perfections, and consistently with the glory of each of these divine Persons, is not only an undoubted truth, but a very important article of faith, as it is the foundation of all those blessings, which are promised, and applied to us in the covenant of grace, in which is all our salvation and our hope. Here let it be consider'd, that, when we speak concerning a covenant, as passing between the Father and the Son, we understand thereby, that there was a mutual consent between them both, that the work of our redemption should be brought about in

^r Psal. xvi. 2, 3.

366 *The Covenant between the Father and Son farther prov'd.*

such a way, as it was, by our Saviour, when this eternal agreement had its accomplishment; and accordingly the Father is said to *have set him up*, as the Head of his elect, *from everlasting*^c, and ordained, that he should execute those offices, which he was to perform, as Mediator, and receive that revenue of glory, that was the result thereof; and the Son, as having the same divine will, could not but consent to do this; and this is called, his eternal undertaking; and, both these together, are stiled the eternal covenant, between the Father and him.

For the proof of this doctrine, we might refer to those several scriptures that speak of our Saviour as *called*, and *given for a covenant of the people*^d, and *fore-ordained*^e, to perform the work which he engaged in, in the behalf of his elect; and also consider him as consenting to do every thing for his people, which he did in time, and to stand in every relation to them, that was subservient to their redemption and salvation, which he could not but do, as having the same divine will with the Father; and, without his consent, it could not properly be said that there was a covenant between them. We might also prove it from those several scriptures, that speak of him, as *sanctified*, and *sent into the world*^f, to act as Mediator, *sealed by the Father*^g, and receiving a *power to lay down his life, and take it up again*^h, that so he might answer the great end of our redemption thereby; and also, from his being empower'd to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; confirmed in his priestly office by *the oath*ⁱ of the Father; sent by him to execute his prophetic office to those whom he was to guide in the way of salvation; and, as *God's King*, *set on his holy hill of Zion*^j. When we consider all these things done, on the Father's part, as antecedent to Christ's acting as Mediator, and, at the same time, when we compare them with other scriptures, that speak of the Son, as consenting to do the will of God, or complying with his call, willing to be and do whatever was necessary, to secure the great ends designed thereby; when we consider him, as taking the human nature into union with the divine, not without his own consent thereunto, and as bearing the punishment due to our sin, which it

would not have been just for God to have inflicted, without his will or consent; I say, this mutual consent between the Father and the Son, that those things should be done which were subservient to the redemption and salvation of the elect, which the scripture is very express in giving an account of, these are a sufficient foundation for our asserting, that there was a covenant between the Father and the Son relating thereunto.

But now we shall enquire, more particularly, into the sense of those scriptures, on which this doctrine is founded. And here we cannot wholly pass over what we read, in *Psal. cxix. 122. Be surety for thy servant for good*; and *Hezekiah's prayer*, in *Isai. xxxviii. 14. I am oppressed, undertake, or be surety, for me*. The *Hebrew* word is the same in both places, and signifies, not barely to confer some privileges on persons, but to do this under the character of a surety; and therefore, when *David* and *Hezekiah* pray that they may be deliver'd, either from their enemies, or their afflictions, by addressing themselves to their Deliverer under this character, it must be supposed that they understand him, as having undertaken to be a Surety for his people, which is a character that belongs only to the Son. And since it is so evident, that his mediatorial work and character was so well known to the Old Testament-church, as their salvation was equally concerned herein with ours; and, since they are often represented as addressing themselves to him by faith and prayer, it seems more than probable that he is so consider'd in these texts, when it is desir'd that he would be *surety for them*, namely, that as he was appointed by the Father, and had undertaken, by his own consent, to stand in that relation, they pray that they might be made partakers of the benefits arising from thence.

There is also another scripture, in which the same word^k is used, which seems to be applied to our Saviour, *viz. in Jer. xxx. 21. Their nobles*, or, as it ought to be render'd, in the singular number, *their noble, or magnificent person, shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his*

^c Prov. viii. 23.

^d Isai. xlii. 6.

^e 1 Pet. i. 20.

^f John x. 36.

^g John vi. 27.

^h John x. 18.

ⁱ Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 21.

^j Psal. ii. 6.

^k The *Hebrew* word in this, and the two other scriptures above-mentioned, is, *בטן* which signifies, *in fidem suam recipere; spondere pro aliquo*; and it is used in several other scriptures, in the same sense, for a person's undertaking to be a surety for another. See *Gen. xliii. 9. Chap. xlv. 32. Prov. xi. 15. Job xvii. 3. 2 Kings xviii. 23.* and elsewhere.

The Covenant between the Father and Son farther prov'd. 367

heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? This sense of the text is very agreeable to several other prophecies, relating to the Messiah's being of the seed of *Israel*; and when it is said, *I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me*, it implies, that he should sustain the character, and perform the work of a surety, in the behalf of his people, for that is the proper sense of the word there used; for *who is this that hath engaged his heart to approach unto me?* that is, who is there, among the sons of men, that dares engage in this work, or is qualified for it? Or it may be understood with a note of admiration, *q. d.* how glorious a person is this, who hath engaged his heart, or (as it was determined that he should) has freely consented to approach unto me, that is, in so doing, to act as a surety with me for my people! and that this is a more probable sense of the text, than to suppose that it is meant either of *Zerubbabel*, or some other governor, that should be set over them, after the captivity, appears, if we compare it with *Ver. 9.* in which it is said, *They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King*, which can be meant of none but Christ, inasmuch as *David* was dead; and none that sat on his throne, or descended from him, can be called *David* in this place, because divine worship is said to be perform'd to him, which could not be done without idolatry, which no true sense of scripture can give countenance to; and this is a character given of our Saviour in other scriptures: Thus, in *Ezek. xxxiv. 24.* *I will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them*; and, in *Hos. iii. 5.* *They shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day*, that is, they shall adhere, and give divine worship, to the Messiah, whom their fathers rejected, when they are converted, in the latter days. Now it is this *David, their King*, who is said to have engaged his heart to approach unto God; and then, in the words immediately following, *Ver. 22.* God reveals himself, as a Covenant-God, to them, which is the consequence of Christ's engaging his heart to approach unto him, *Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.* Now this proves an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, in that the Father wills, or determines, that he shall draw near, or approach to him, as a surety, and the Son consents, in that he has engaged his heart

to do it; and all this with a design that his covenant should be established, and that he should be a God to his people.

There is another scripture, which proves that there was a federal transaction between the Father and the Son, from several expressions therein used, namely, in *Isai. xlv. 1, 2, 6.* which is, beyond dispute, spoken concerning our Saviour; for 'tis applied to him in the New Testament^a. Herein God the Father calls him *his Servant*, as denoting that it was his will, or (to use that mode of speaking, which is generally applied to covenants between man and man) that he stipulated with him, to perform the work which he engaged in, as Mediator, to which he is said to be *called in righteousness*; and, with respect to his human nature, in which he perform'd it, he is stiled *God's elect*, as fore-ordain'd hereunto, and the person *in whom his soul delighteth*, as he is glorified by him in the faithful discharge thereof; and, that he might not fail therein, God promises *to hold his hand, and keep him*, and, as the result of his having accomplish'd it, *to give him for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*.

And elsewhere, in *Isai. xlix. 8, 9.* which also appears to be spoken to Christ, not only from the context, but from the reference to it in the New Testament, *'In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew your selves*, we have a plain intimation, of his being ordain'd by the Father to perform that work, which he was engaged in, as Mediator; and his *being given for a covenant of the people*, signifies his being sent into the world, in pursuance of a covenant, in which the salvation of his people was contain'd. And there is another scripture, in which our Saviour, speaking to his disciples, says, in *Luke xxii. 29.* *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me*^c; or, I confer the blessings of this kingdom upon you, in a covenant way, as my Father hath appointed me to do, in that eternal covenant, which pass'd between him and me.

Again, there are several rewards, which were promised to him, as the consequence of his discharging the work committed to him, some of which respected

^a Matt. xii. 18—21.

^c 2 Cor. vi. 2.

^f διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν, καθὼς δέδοται μοι ὁ πατήρ μου, βασιλείαν. that

368 *The Covenant between the Father and Son farther prov'd.*

that glory which belongs to his Person, as Mediator; and others, more especially, respected the salvation of his people, and therein the success of his undertaking: Thus 'tis said, in *Isai. liii. 10.* *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands;* together with several other things relating to the event, and consequence of his performing the work he was engaged in.

Moreover, as he was call'd to this work, or, as it was, as we before explain'd it, the result of the Father's will, that he should perform it; so we have elsewhere an account of his own consent, as implying, that it was the result of his own will, as well as his Father's: Thus 'tis said, in *Psal. xl. 6—8.* *Mine ears hast thou opened, or boared, alluding to a custom used under the ceremonial law, by which the willing servant was signified to be obliged, by his own consent, to serve his master for ever.* Thus God the Father engaged Christ, if I may so express it, to perform the work of a Mediator; and then we have an account of his consent hereunto, when he says, *Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;* and this mutual consent is farther express'd, in *Isai. l. 5.* *The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious; neither turned away back.*

And he is further represented, as making a demand, or insisting on the accomplishment of what was stipulated in this covenant, and this he had a warrant to do from the Father, in *Psal. ii. 8.* *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* These, and many other scriptures of the like nature, sufficiently prove this doctrine, that there was an eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, relating to the redemption and salvation of the elect; and this implies more than his being barely fore-ordained to perform the work he was engaged in, as he is said to have been^h; for that, alone, would not have proved that there was a federal transaction between the Father and him; since it may be said of any one, who is engaged in works of an inferior nature, that God, who called him to perform them, fore-ordained that he should do so: But when it is said, concerning our Saviour, not only that he engaged in the work of our redemption,

as the result of his Father's will, but of his own, and so consented to do whatever was incumbent on him, as Mediator, this certainly argues that there was an eternal covenant between the Father and him, with relation to this matter, so far as we may be allowed to retain any of those *Ideas* taken from human covenants, when we speak of any transaction between two divine Persons.

There is but one scripture more that I shall mention, which though some will not allow that it relates to this matter, yet, if we duly consider the scope and design thereof, together with its connection with the foregoing words, may probably appear to be of some weight to confirm this doctrine, namely, in *Zech. vi. 13.* in which it is said, *The counsel of peace shall be between them both.* Some, indeed, understand these words, as referring to *Joshua* and *Zerubbabel*, and that they signify their mutual consent, to promote the peace and welfare of the church: But this cannot reasonably be concluded to be the sense of the text; for *Zerubbabel* is not mentioned in this *Chapter*; nor are there any two persons spoken of therein, that it can be applied to, but *Jehovah* and the *Branch*, that is, the Father and the Son, who are mentioned in the foregoing words; Christ, who is called the *Branch*, is said to *build the temple of the Lord*, and to be a *Priest upon his throne*; and this work, which he was engaged in, and the royal dignity, which he was advanced to, are both of them said to be the result of a counsel, or federal transaction, that was between them both.

If it be objected to this, that this counsel of peace only respects the harmony that there is between Christ's priestly and kingly offices, as both of them have a reference to our salvation: This cannot well agree with the meaning of the word *Counsel*, which implies in it a confederacy between two persons, and not the tendency of two offices, executed to bring about the same end.

And if it be further objected, that the grammatical construction of the words do not favour the sense which we give of them, inasmuch as they contain an account of something that was future, and not from all eternity. To this it may be replied, that it is not, in the least, disagreeable to the sense of the words, and other phrases of the like import, used in scripture, to understand them in the sense before mentioned, since it is no uncom-

^h *Exod. xxi. 5, 6.*

^h *1 Pet. i. 20.*

The Covenant of Redemption and of Grace, how distinguish'd. 369

mon thing, in scripture, for that to be said to be, that appears to be: Thus 'tis said, *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*ⁱ, that is, he hath, by his raising him from the dead, demonstrated him to be *both Lord and Christ*, which, in reality, he was from all eternity; so, in this text, when it is said, that *the counsel of peace shall be between them both*, it signifies, that Christ's building the temple, and bearing the glory, and sitting as a Priest upon his throne, is a plain evidence, or demonstration, that there was a counsel, or covenant, between the Father and him, from all eternity, relating to the peace and welfare of his people, who are the spiritual house that he builds, and the subjects whom he governs, defends, and saves. Thus concerning the federal transaction that was between the Father and the Son; and, since this is called, in this *Answer*, *The covenant of grace*, it may be necessary for us to enquire,

VI. Whether this be a distinct covenant from that which God is said to enter into, or make with man. This covenant is said, indeed, to be made with Christ, as the Head of his elect: But it may be enquired, whether there be not also another covenant, which is generally stiled the covenant of grace, that is made with the elect, as parties concerned therein. Every one, that is conversant in the writings of those who treat on this subject, will observe, that divines often distinguish between the covenant of redemption, and that of grace; the former they suppose to be made with Christ, in the behalf of his elect; the latter, to be made with them, in which all spiritual blessings are promised, and applied to them, which are founded on Christ's mediation; and accordingly they say, the *covenant of redemption* was made with Christ more immediately for himself; whereas the *covenant of grace* is made with believers for Christ's sake, in which respect they suppose that these are two distinct covenants, and explain themselves thus.

1. In the covenant of redemption, made with Christ, there were several promises given, which more immediately respected himself; and these related, some of them, to those supports and encouragements that he should receive from the Father, which were necessary, in order to his being car-

ried through the sufferings that he was to undergo, viz. that God would hold his hand, that he should not fail, or be discouraged^k; and others respected that mediatorial glory, which should be confer'd upon him, when his sufferings were finished; as it is said, *Ought not Christ to have suffer'd, and to enter into his glory*^l? and that he should have a name given him above every name^m, and many other promises to the like purpose.

And, besides these, there were other promises made to him, respecting his elect, as that he should have a seed to serve himⁿ, and that he should see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied; and that God would divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong^o, or that his difficult undertaking should be attended with its desired success, that so it might not be said that he died in vain.

But, on the other hand, in the covenant of grace, which they suppose to be distinct from that of redemption, God promiseth forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, through Christ; or that that should be restored to us by him, which we lost by our fall in *Adam*, with great advantage; and that all the blessings, which we stand in need of, for the beginning, carrying on, and compleating the work of grace in us, and the making us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, should be freely given us. Now, as these promises are made to the elect, the covenant, in which they are contain'd, is called, *The covenant of grace*, and so distinguish'd from the covenant of redemption.

2. In the covenant of redemption, as they farther explain it, the elect, on whose account it was made, were consider'd, as to be redeem'd by Christ: But, in the covenant of grace, they are to be consider'd as redeem'd by him; therefore the covenant of redemption is antecedent, or subservient, to the covenant of grace.

3. They farther suppose, that the conditions of the covenant of redemption, on which the promises made therein were founded, are what Christ did and suffer'd in his own Person; whereas faith, wrought in us, is generally stiled by them, a condition of the covenant of grace, and as such it is variously explain'd, as we shall have occasion to observe, under the next *Answer*, in which faith is said to be required, as the condition to interest believers therein; in this respect, among

ⁱ Acts ii. 36.

^k Isai. xxiv. 4.

^l Luke xxiv. 26.

^m Phil. ii. 9.

ⁿ Psal. xxii. 30.

^o Isai. liii. 11, 12.

370 *The Covenant of Redemption and of Grace, how distinguish'd.*

others, the covenant of redemption is oftentimes explain'd, as a distinct covenant from that of grace.

I confess, I am not desirous to offend against the generation of those who have insisted on this subject, in such a way, as that they have not advanced any doctrine derogatory to the divine perfections, or subversive of the grace of God, display'd in this covenant; and therefore I am inclined to think, as some have done, that this controversy may be compromised; or, if we duly weigh those distinctions that are necessary to be consider'd, it will appear to be little more than what consists in different modes of explication, used by those, who, in the main, intend the same thing. I shall therefore humbly offer my thoughts, about this matter, in the four following *Heads*.

(1.) It is to be allowed, on all hands, that the covenant of redemption, as some stile it, is a covenant of the highest grace, so far as it respects the advantages that the elect are to receive from it; for it is a wonderful instance of grace, that there should be an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, relating to their salvation, and that herein he should promise to Christ, that, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings, he would give grace and glory to them, as it is allowed by all, who have just notions, either of the covenant of redemption, or that of grace, that he did herein.

(2.) It must be farther allowed, on both sides, whether it be supposed that the covenant of grace, and the covenant of redemption, are distinct covenants, or not, that salvation, and all the blessings, which we generally call privileges of the covenant of grace, have their first foundation in this transaction, between the Father and the Son; so that if there had not been such a covenant, which some call a covenant of redemption, we could have had no promise of these privileges made in the covenant of grace.

(3.) As there is nothing promised, or given, in the covenant of grace, but what is purchased and applied by Christ, so there is nothing promised to Christ, in the covenant of redemption, as some stile it, but what, some way or other, respects the advantage of his people: Thus whatever was stipulated between the Father and the Son, in that covenant, was with a peculiar regard to their salvation. Did Christ, as their surety, promise to pay that debt, which was due from them, to

the justice of God? This must be consider'd, as redounding to their advantage. And, was there a promise given him, as was before observed, that God *would hold his hand, that he should not fail, or be discouraged*, till he had finished the work that he came about? This must also be supposed to redound to our advantage, as hereby our salvation is secured, which it could not have been, had he sunk under the weight of that wrath, which he bore. And, was there a promise given him, that he should, after his sufferings, *enter into his glory*? This also redounds to the advantage of the elect; for it not only consists in his being freed from his sufferings, and having some personal glories put upon him, but in his going thither to prepare a place for them, and with this design, that they should be brought there *to behold his glory*; and this is also consider'd, as a pledge and earnest of their future happiness, to whom he says, *Because I live, ye shall live also* ^v.

(4.) When we consider this covenant, as made with Christ, whether we call it the covenant of redemption, or of grace, still we must look upon it as made with him, as the Head and Representative of his elect, and consequently it was made with them, as is observed in this *Answer*, as his seed; therefore if the question be only this, whether it be more or less proper to call this two covenants, or one, I will not contend with them, who, in compliance with the common mode of speaking, assert, that they are two distinct covenants: But yet I would rather choose to call them two great branches of the same covenant; one whereof respects what Christ was to do and suffer, and the glory that he was to be afterwards possessed of; the other more immediately respects that salvation, which was to be treasured up in, and applied by him to his elect; and therefore I cannot but think, that what is contained in this *Answer*, that the covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the Head, and, in him, with the elect, as his seed, is a very unexceptionable explication of this doctrine.

VII. Since we frequently read, in scripture, of God's entering into covenant with man, and man with him, this is next to be explained, in such a way, as is consistent with the divine perfections; and, in order hereto, we have, in our

How GOD is said to enter into Covenant with Man. 371

entrance on this subject, enquired^a into the grammatical sense of the word *Covenant*, and the common acceptation thereof in scripture, when applied to any transaction between God and man, and have shewn, that, however, there may be stipulation and re-stipulation, and thereby a passing over of mutual rights, from one party concerned to the other, in covenants between man and man; yet that this cannot, consistently with the glory of God, and that infinite distance which there is between him and the creature, be applied to the covenant of grace, and have produced some scriptures to prove, that the main thing to be consider'd therein, is God's promising the blessings that accompany salvation to his people.

Other scriptures might have been refer'd to, to the same purpose, in which, when God is said to make a covenant with his people, we read of nothing but promises of temporal, or spiritual privileges, which he would confer on them: Thus, when he made a covenant with *Abraham*, he says, *Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates*^b; and elsewhere he says, *This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*^c. We might also consider the description hereof, as it is called, *A covenant of promise*^d, and they, who are interest'd herein, as called, *The children of promise*^e. Nevertheless, God has ordained, that, pursuant to this method of applying the promises of this covenant, none should have ground to expect to be made partakers thereof, but in such a way, as tends to set forth his infinite sovereignty, and unalienable right to obedience from his creatures, which they are bound to perform, not only as subjects, under a natural obligation to obey the divine law, but as those who are laid under a super-added engagement thereunto, by the grace of the covenant. This will prepare the way for what may be farther said, in order to our understanding the meaning of those scriptures, that speak of God's en-

tering into a covenant with man, and man with him. Therefore let it be observed,

1. That when God enter'd into a covenant with Christ, as the Head of his elect, this included his entering into covenant with them, as 'tis express'd in this *Answer*; so that they have their respective concern therein in all things, excepting what relates to his character, as Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, and those peculiar branches of this covenant, which, as was before observed, belong only to himself, which some call the covenant of redemption, as distinct from the covenant of grace. From hence it may be observed, without any strain on the sense of words, that the same covenant that was made with him, was in that peculiar branch thereof that respected the elect, or the privileges that they were to receive from him, made with them. This is very agreeable to, and tends to explain that peculiar mode of speaking, often used by the Apostle *Paul*, concerning believers being *crucified with Christ*^f; *dead*^g, *buried*^h, *quicken'd* or *risen*ⁱ, and made to *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*^j, as denoting their being made partakers, as his members, of the benefits arising from Christ's sufferings and glory, as really as though they had suffer'd, and were now actually glorified with him.

2. Since the covenant of grace is sometimes called a covenant of promise, for the reasons before mentioned, we may easily understand hereby, that God's entering into covenant with his people, signifies his giving, or making known to them, those great and precious promises, that are contained therein, which have a more immediate reference to their salvation; and, on the other hand, his keeping covenant with them, implies, his bestowing on them the blessings promised in it, which is otherwise called, his *remembering his holy covenant*^k, or his *performing the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he had sworn unto them from the days of old*^l; and it is sometimes called his *shewing them his covenant*^m, not barely in a way of revelation, but special application of the blessings contained therein, and his *bringing them into the bond of the covenant*ⁿ, that is, engaging or obliging them to obedience, from the

^a See Pag. 363.

^b Gen. xv. 18.

^c Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

^d Eph. ii. 12.

^e Gal. iv. 28.

^f Gal. ii. 20.

^g Rom. vi. 8.

^h Ver. 4.

ⁱ Col. ii. 12. compared with Chap. iii. 1.

^j Eph.

ii. 6.

^k Luke i. 72.

^l Micah vii. 20.

^m Psal. xxv. 14.

ⁿ Ezek. xx. 37.

372 *What it is for Man to enter into Covenant with God.*

constraints of his love and grace, manifested in the promises of this covenant; so that now they are doubly bound to be his, not only as he is their Creator and Sovereign, but as he has made them, by this federal transaction, the peculiar objects of his favour and grace.

3. When God is pleased, as he often does, to annex to this covenant, a demand of faith, repentance, or any other graces, to be exercised by those, who may claim an interest in the blessings thereof, this is agreeable to that *Idea*, which, as was before observed, is contained in this covenant, by which 'tis denominated an establishment, or divine appointment, or, as 'tis sometimes called, a *statute*^b; and this respects the connection of those graces with salvation, and their indispensable obligation thereto, who hope to attain it. But this is rather a consequence of God's entering into covenant with them, than an antecedent condition, stipulated by him, which would infer a kind of suspense in him, whether he should fulfil his promise or no, till the conditions were performed. This is the principal thing we militate against, when we except against the use of the word *Stipulation*, with relation hereunto; whereas, if nothing else were intended by this word, but the necessary connection, which God has ordain'd, that there should be between the blessings promised, and the grace demanded in this covenant, as some, who use the word, understand nothing else by it; I would not contend about persons using or laying aside an improper, and, I think, I may say, unscriptural mode of speaking.

Thus concerning the meaning of God's entering into covenant with man. We shall now proceed to the latter branch of this *Head*, namely, what we are to understand by those scriptures that speak of man's entering into covenant with God: Such a mode of speaking we have, when *Moses* says to the people, *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day*ⁱ; and 'tis said elsewhere, *The people enter'd into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their soul*^k; and that *Josiah* made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with

all their heart, and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant, that were written in this book, and all the people stood to the covenant^l. This is a most solemn transaction, and includes in it the very essentials of practical religion; therefore 'tis necessary for us to enquire, what we are to understand thereby; and, since scripture is the best interpreter of it self, and parallel texts give light to each other, we may observe what is said elsewhere, upon the like occasion, where God speaks of some that *chuse the things that please him, love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, and take hold of his covenant*^m; so that to enter into covenant, is to take hold of God's covenant; to embrace the blessings promised therein, as the Apostle speaks of those *who died in faith, not having received the promises, or the blessings promised, but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them*ⁿ. Again, as we receive the blessings of the covenant by faith, so to enter into covenant with God implies, a professed dedication of our selves to a Covenant-God, with a due sense of our obligation to yield that obedience, which we are engaged to thereby, or a declaration that we pretend not to lay claim to the blessings of the covenant, without being enabled, by his grace, to comply with the demands thereof; and this is sometimes express'd, by swearing to the Lord, as 'tis said, *Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*^o. As God, when he enters into a covenant with man, is sometimes said to swear to him, or to confirm his promise by his oath, upon which account the covenant of grace is sometimes called *his oath*, as in one of the scriptures before mention'd, and others that might have been refer'd to^p; so, on the other hand, our entering into covenant with him, is our swearing fealty, as subjects do to their princes, whereby they own them to be their rightful governors, and themselves under an obligation to serve them.

This is farther explained, in that solemn transaction that passed between God and his people, in the close of the ministry and life of *Moses*^q, by which we may understand what is meant, in other places, by God's entering into covenant with them; this is express'd by his *avouching them to be his peculiar people, as he had promised them, and that they should keep all his commandments*, q. d. he confer'd this pri-

^b Numb. xviii. 19. Psal. l. 16.

ⁱ Deut. xxix. 10—12.

^k 2 Chron. xv. 12.

^l 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

^m Isai. lvi. 4, 6.

ⁿ Heb. xi. 13.

^o Isai. xlv. 23.

^p Luke i. 72, 73.

^q Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.

vilege

How the Grace of GOD is manifested in the second Covenant. 373

vilege upon them with that view, that they might reckon themselves under the highest obligation to be obedient to him; and then we have an explication of man's entering into covenant with God, when 'tis said, *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God*, that is, thou hast publicly declared, that thou art willing to be subject to him, as thy Covenant-God, and expressed a ready inclination, pursuant hereunto, to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: This is such an entering into covenant, as is incumbent on all who expect the blessings thereof; and, if any one intends nothing more than this by stipulation, when he uses the word in explaining this doctrine, I will not contend with him; but, since 'tis to use a word without its proper *Ideas*, which others annex to it, I humbly conceive this doctrine may be better explained without it.

QUEST. XXXII. *How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?*

ANSW. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth, and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces, and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed to salvation.

SINCE the covenant, which we have begun to consider, is called the covenant of grace; 'tis necessary for us to shew in what respects the grace of God is manifested therein, and, in order thereunto, we may observe,

I. That life and salvation, which are very comprehensive blessings, containing

all that sinful creatures stand in need of, are promised herein. Hereby the grace of God is more eminently illustrated than it was in the first covenant, in which tho' life was promised; yet there was no promise of salvation, or of the recovery of a forfeited life. This is only brought to light by the gospel, which contains a glorious discovery of the grace of this covenant: The blessings promised therein, are, grace here, and glory hereafter; all which are contained in that promise, *I will be a God to thee*, that is, I will deal with thee in such a way, as that all my divine perfections shall contribute to thy happiness. And sometimes, when God reveals himself as a Covenant-God, he promises, as he did to *Abraham*, that *he will be their shield, and their exceeding great reward*. And there are other promises respecting the forgiveness of sin; as when God says, *I, even I, am he that blot-teth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*; and, that we may consider this in its utmost extent, the Apostle says as much as can be expressed in words, which is the consequence of God's being a Covenant-God to his people, when he tells them, *All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours*.

II. Man could not have been made partaker of these invaluable blessings, contain'd in this covenant, without the interposition of a mediator; for he no sooner rebel'd against God, but he was separated from his presence, and deprived of all those blessings, which he might otherwise have expected; and, on the other hand, the holiness and justice of God obliged him to testify his displeasure against him, whereby he was utterly excluded from all hope of obtaining any blessings from him: The perfections of the divine nature render'd it necessary that a satisfaction for sin committed, should be insisted on; and this could not be given by man in his own person, nor could he reasonably expect that God should receive him into favour without it, as having render'd himself guilty in his sight, and so, liable to condemnation. Therefore, since he could do nothing that had any tendency to repair the injuries which he had offer'd to the divine justice, if ever he have access to God, and acceptance in his sight, it must be in and through a

[Gen. xv. 1.

[Isai. xliii. 25.

[1 Cor. iii. 22.

374 GOD'S Grace farther manifested in the second Covenant.

mediator; which leads us to consider what we are to understand by a mediator, and what was to be done by him, in order to the procuring this favour.

A mediator, in general, is one who interposes between two parties that are at variance, in order to make peace; and this he does, either by endeavouring to persuade the party offended to lay aside his resentment, and forgive the injury, which is a less proper sense of the word; or else by making an overture of satisfaction, as an inducement hereunto. In the former sense it would have been an affront to the divine Majesty, and an injury to his justice, for any one to desire that God should be reconciled, without a satisfaction given; in the latter, we are to understand the word *Mediator*, when applied to Christ, in this *Answer*. He is not therefore herein to be consider'd barely as a Mediator of intercession, as pleading that God would remit the debt, out of his mere sovereignty or grace; but as a Mediator of satisfaction, or a Surety, entering into an obligation to answer all the demands of justice. In this respect, he is the Mediator of the covenant; whereas, when he is sent, by God, to reveal, or make known the blessings thereof to man, he is stiled, *The Messenger of the covenant*^u. It was possible for a mere creature to perform the work of a Mediator in this lower, and less proper sense of the word; or, provided satisfaction were given to the justice of God, to intercede with him for the sinner, or intreat him to turn away from the fierceness of his wrath, which sin deserved, in which sense *Moses* is stiled a *mediator*, and in no other^x; so some understand that text, as spoken of him, when the Apostle says^y of the law, that it was ordain'd by angels, in the hand of a Mediator^z; and, agreeably hereunto, *Moses* says, *I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid, by reason of the fire*^a; and elsewhere, after *Israel* had sinned, in worshipping the golden calf, he says, *You have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin*^b; not that he was to be accounted a mediator of satisfaction, for the atonement that he hoped to make, was by entreaty, or humble supplication, that God would not destroy them, as they had deserv'd. This I call a less proper sense of the word *Mediator*; whereas, in this *Answer*, Christ is stiled a Mediator,

in the same sense in which he was a Redeemer, or Surety, for man, or made a proper atonement to procure reconciliation between God and man by his blood, of which more will be consider'd, when we speak concerning Christ's priestly office.

III. It is a very great instance of grace, that God should admit of a Mediator, who might have exacted the debt of us in our own persons; and, we being unable to pay it, might have punished us with everlasting destruction. That he was not obliged to admit of a Mediator, will appear, if we consider the nature of the debt due from us, who were obliged to perform perfect obedience, or else to suffer punishment; and therefore he might have refused to have allowed of this to be performed by another, in our stead: In this case, it is not like as when pecuniary debts are paid, which cannot be refused by the creditor, though paid by one that is surety for the debtor: But, since this will be more particularly consider'd, when we speak concerning the satisfaction which Christ gave to the justice of God, as our great High Priest, all that we shall add, concerning it, at present, is, that it was an instance of that grace, which was display'd in the covenant, in which Christ is consider'd as a Mediator of satisfaction.

IV. The grace of God farther appears, in that he not only admitted of a Mediator, but provided one. It was impossible for fallen man to find out any one that would so much as plead his cause, or speak a word in his behalf, till satisfaction were first given; and no mere creature could pay unto God a ransom that was worthy of his acceptance, or available, to answer the end designed thereby. If the best of creatures had undertaken the work, it would have miscarried in his hands: How deplorable and hopeless then must the condition of fallen man for ever have been, if God had not found out the expedient himself to bring about our redemption! This was a blessing unthought of, unask'd for by him. I will not deny but that man might have some *Ideas* of the divinity and glory of the second Person in the Godhead, as the doctrine of the Trinity was reveal'd to him, while in a state of innocency, as it was necessary that it should be, in order to his worshipping of each of the divine Persons, and I doubt not but that he retain'd

^u Mal. iii. 1.

^z Vid. Bez. & Whitby in loc.

^x Such a one is more properly

^a Deut. v. 5.

called *Internuncius*, than *Mediator*.

^b Exod. xxxii. 30.

^y Gal. iii. 19.

some *Ideas* hereof when fallen: But it may be question'd, whether he knew that it was possible for the Son of God to be incarnate; or suppose, for argument sake, we allow that he had some *Idea* of the possibility thereof; yet he could never have known that he was willing to submit to this astonishing instance of condescension, and thereby to put himself in the sinner's room, that he might procure that redemption that was necessary for him. This mystery of the divine will was hid in God, and therefore could never have been known by him without revelation, and consequently would not have afforded him any matter of relief in his deplorable state. How wonderful therefore was the grace of God, that he should find out this expedient, and lay help on one that is mighty, or provide one to do that for him, which none else could have done!

And to this we may add, that it was no less an instance of divine grace, that God the Son should consent to perform this work for him: His undertaking it, was without the least force or compulsion, for that would have been inconsistent with his consenting to become a Surety for us, and, as such, to suffer in our room and stead, since all punishment must either be deserved by him, that bears it, or else voluntarily submitted to: The former of these can by no means be said of Christ; for a personal desert of punishment is inconsistent with his spotless purity, and would have render'd the price, laid down by him for our redemption, invalid, therefore he voluntarily condescended to engage in this work: He gave his life a ransom for many; and this is consider'd as a peculiar display of grace in him, as the Apostle expresses it, *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet, for your sakes, he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich*^c.

V. This Mediator being provided for man, without his desert or expectation, we proceed to consider him as offer'd to him, and, together with him, life and salvation. This is the great design of the gospel, to discover, or make an overture hereof to him; without this, the gospel could not be preached, nor a visible publication made of the grace of the covenant contain'd herein: But, since the overture of grace, or the call of God to accept of, and embrace Christ, as offer'd in the

gospel, is more particularly consider'd under a following *Answer*^d, we shall reserve the farther consideration of this matter to it.

VI. 'Tis farther said, in this *Answer*, that the grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in his requiring faith, as the condition to interest believers in Christ. This expression may be allowed of, or excepted against, according to the method taken to explain it, which we shall endeavour to do, and therein shew in what sense we deny the covenant of grace to be conditional; and then enquire, whether there be not another sense, agreeable to the divine perfections, in which these words may be understood, and other expressions, of the like nature, frequently used by divines, in which faith is stiled a condition thereof; and accordingly we shall enquire,

1. What we are to understand by a person's having an interest in Christ. This implies our having a right to claim him, as our Mediator, Surety, Advocate, and Saviour, and with him all those spiritual blessings, which are purchased and applied by him to those whom he has redeem'd; so that such an one may say, upon good grounds, Christ is mine, together with *all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in him*.

Here let it be consider'd, that it is one thing to say, that Christ is the Redeemer and Saviour of man, or, in particular, of his elect, who are given to him for this end; and another thing for a person to say, he is my Redeemer or Saviour: The former of these is a truth, founded in scripture-revelation; and accordingly every one may say, as *Moses* expresses it, *Yea, he loved the people*^e, or his peculiar chosen people; or, as the Apostle says, *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it*^f: But he, who has an interest in Christ, has a right to claim him, as his Saviour, and therefore may say, with the Apostle, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*^g. This I rather choose to express, by a believer's having a right to claim him as his Saviour, than his being actually enabled so to do, inasmuch as many have an interest in Christ, who are destitute of that assurance, which would give them a comfortable sense thereof in their own souls.

2. We are now to consider how faith is said to be required, as the condition to interest us in Christ; or how far this ex-

^c 2 Cor. viii. 9.

^d See Quest. LXVII.

^e Deut. xxxiii. 3.

^f Eph. v. 25.

^g Gal. ii. 20.

pression

376 *What is commonly understood by Conditions of a Covenant.*

pression may be qualified and explain'd, without asserting any thing derogatory to the glory of God, or the grace of the covenant. The word *Condition*, though often used when we speak of contracts between man and man, as an essential ingredient therein, is not so plainly contain'd in those explications of the covenant of grace, which we have in scripture; and, whenever we use it, with a particular application thereunto, we must understand it in such a sense, as is agreeable to the divine perfections. Therefore, that we may compare these two senses of the word *Condition* together, in order to our determining how far it may be used, or laid aside, in explaining this doctrine, let us consider,

(1.) That in human covenants, in which things are promised on certain conditions, these conditions are supposed to be possible to be perform'd, otherwise the promise, depending thereon, is render'd void, and it contains no other than a virtual denial to make it good. Thus the king of *Israel* did not, at first, understand the message sent him by the king of *Syria*, requiring of him to heal *Naaman* of his leprosy, as a condition of peace and friendship between them, and the inference he makes from it was, that he had a design to seek a quarrel against him; and his reasoning would have been just, had it been intended in this sense, since the condition was not in his own power. Moreover, if a master should tell his servant, that he would give him a reward, in case he would perform the work of ten days in one, he would conclude nothing else from it, but that he was resolved not to give him any thing. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, we must consider whether faith, when it is a condition of the covenant of grace, be in our own power or no. There are some external acts thereof, indeed, which are so; but these are too low to be deem'd conditions of salvation, or of the blessings of the covenant of grace; and as for those acts which are supernatural, or the effects of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, though they are inseparably connected with salvation, yet they are not in our power; so as that we may conclude, that they are proposed as conditions, in the same sense as those things are said to be, that are supposed to contain this ingredient in them.

In this respect, the covenant of grace, as to the conditionality of it, differs from the covenant of innocency, in which per-

fect obedience, which was the condition thereof, was so far in man's power, that he could have perform'd it, without the super-added assistance of divine grace: But when, on the other hand, perfect obedience is consider'd, as a condition of fallen man's *entering into life*, in which sense our Saviour's reply to the young man's question, in *Matt. xix. 17.* is understood by many, this is a plain intimation that eternal life is not to be obtain'd this way, inasmuch as the condition is impossible.

(2.) When conditions are insisted on, in human covenants, it is generally supposed, that though it be possible for the person, that enjoins them, to assist and enable him, who is under this obligation, to perform them, yet he will not give him that assistance; for, if he does, the contract can hardly be reckon'd conditional, but absolute: Thus if a creditor should tell an insolvent debtor, that he will discharge him, provided he pays the debt, and, at the same time, gives him to understand that he will supply him with a sum of money, that shall enable him to do it, this is altogether the same as though he had discharged him, without any conditional demand of payment. This I cannot but mention, because there are some persons, who speak of faith, as a condition of the covenant of grace, and, at the same time, take it for granted, that it is not in our own power to perform it: nevertheless, since God has promised that he will work it in us, they conclude it to be conditional; whereas such a promise as this would render the covenant absolute, or, at least, not conditional, in the same sense, in which human covenants are, and only infer what we do not deny, that there is a necessary connection between that grace, which God will enable us to perform, and salvation, which he has promised in this covenant.

(3.) When any thing is promised to another, on condition that he do what he is enjoin'd of him, it is generally supposed that it is a dubious and uncertain matter whether this condition shall be fulfilled, and the promise take place; or, as I may express it, every condition contains not a necessary, but an uncertain connection between the promised advantage, and the duty enjoin'd, and that for this reason, because all human covenants depend on the power and will of men, who are under conditional engagements to perform what is demanded therein; and

and these are supposed to be mutable and defective, and, as far as they are so, the performance of the condition may be reckon'd dubious; and he that made the promise is liable to the same uncertainty, whether he shall make it good or no. This will hardly be denied, by those who defend the other side of the question, who, in explaining the nature of human liberty, generally suppose, that every one, who acts freely, might do the contrary; therefore they must, from hence, conclude, that, if the performing the conditions of a covenant be the result of man's free will, it is possible for him not to perform them, and therefore it must be a matter of uncertainty, whether a person, who promises a reward upon the performance of these conditions, will confer it or no. But, however this may be applied to human covenants, we are not to suppose that faith, or any other grace, is, in this respect, a condition of the covenant of grace, as though God's conferring the blessings promised therein were dependent on the will of man, as determining it self to the exercise of these graces; in this respect, we cannot but deny the covenant of grace to be conditional.

(4.) If we take an estimate of the worth and value of a condition enjoin'd, the advantages that he, who enjoins it, expects to receive from it, or the reference that the performance thereof has to the procuring the blessing promised, in which case the person, who has fulfil'd it, may be said to merit, or have whereof to glory in himself, as to what concerns the part he has perform'd therein; this must not be applied to any transaction between God and man, and therefore is wholly to be excluded from those *Ideas*, which are contained in the word *Condition*, when applied to the covenant of grace, as will be allowed by most, who do not give into the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works. Concerning the worth and value of faith, and all other graces, I would not be thought, in the least, to depreciate or divest them of that excellency, which they have, above all other effects of God's power and blessings of providence; whereas certainly we ought to bless God for them, or glory in him, as the Author of them: But that which we would fence against in this matter, is nothing more than what our Saviour does, when he says, *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are*

unprofitable servants^h. And I would not have any one suppose, that whatever condition is perform'd by us, has such a value put on it, as that eternal life is hereupon due to us, in a way of debt, which would make way for boasting. 'Tis true, the conditions which Christ performed in that branch of the covenant, which more immediately respected himself, which some call the covenant of redemption, were properly meritorious, and the blessings he purchased thereby were given him in a way of debt, and not as an undeserved favour: But, if we suppose that there is the same reference of faith, or any other grace acted by us to that salvation, which we expect, we turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, and resolve that into our selves which is due to God alone.

But since many excellent divines have asserted faith to be a condition of the covenant of grace, who do not understand the word *Condition*, either as containing in it any thing dubious or uncertain on the one hand, or meritorious on the other; and probably they choose to express themselves so, in compliance with custom, and to explain away the common *Ideas* of the word *Condition*, as applied to human covenants, rather than altogether to lay it aside; and, it may be, they do this, lest they should be thought to deny the necessary connection between faith and salvation. I shall therefore, for the same reason, conclude this *Head* with the following propositions, whereby our not using the word *Condition*, may be vindicated, from any just exception; or, our using of it may not appear to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, or the grace of this covenant. Therefore,

1st. We shall lay down this, as an undoubted truth; the denial whereof would be subversive of all religion, that faith, and all other graces, are required by God, and our obligation thereunto is indispensable; whether it be reckon'd a condition of the covenant or no, it is no less a duty. 'Tis true, there are some who distinguish between the obligation of a law, and that of a covenant; the former of which depends on an express command; the latter is the result of some blessings promised or confer'd, which has in it the obligation of a law, but not the formal nature of it; and therefore they conclude, that we are commanded by God, as a Law-giver, to believe and repent, but that 'tis more proper to say, we are rather engaged

^h Luke xvii. 10.

378 Faith, and other Graces promised; connected with Salvation.

by him, as a Covenant-God, than commanded to exercise these graces: But this dispute is rather about the propriety of words, than the main substance of the doctrine it self; and therefore I shall enter no farther into this critical enquiry, but content my self with the general assertion, that faith, and all other graces, are necessary duties; without which, *it is impossible to please God*, to use the Apostle's expression¹, or to have any right to the character of Christians.

2^{dly}. Faith, and all other graces, are to be also consider'd as blessings, promised in the covenant of grace. This appears from those scriptures that speak of them as *the gifts of God*², purchased by the blood of Christ, and so founded on *his righteousness*³, and wrought in us by his Spirit, and the *exceeding greatness of his power*⁴, and as discriminating blessings, which all are not partakers of, as the Apostle says, *All men have not faith*⁵.

This may be farther argued, from what Christ undertook to purchase for, and apply to his people, as their federal Head; so that, in pursuance hereof, all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, are bestowed on them, in him; and hereby the covenant is made good to them, as God is said, *together with Christ, to give them all things*⁶. First, Christ is given for a covenant of his people, and then, upon his fulfilling what he undertook to procure for them, all that grace, which is treasured up in him, is applied to them; therefore faith, and other concomitant graces, are covenant-blessings.

3^{dly}. There is a certain connection between faith, with other concomitant graces, and salvation. But this having been consider'd elsewhere, together with the sense of those scriptures, that seem to be laid down in a conditional form, from whence the arguments, to prove the conditionality of the covenant of grace, are generally taken⁷; all that we shall add, at present, is, that since, in this eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, it was agreed, established, and, on our Saviour's part, undertaken, that the elect should be not only redeemed, but sanctified, and enabled to exercise all grace, before they are brought to glory, this is made good to them in this covenant; and therefore, as the consequence of Christ's purchase, faith, and all other graces, are wrought in the soul, who afterwards, in

receiving the end of faith, is brought to eternal salvation; so that we may as well separate Christ's undertaking to redeem his people from their attaining salvation, as we can his applying those graces which accompany it.

However, when we speak of these graces, as connected with salvation, we must not conclude that they are the cause thereof. Though we are saved in a way of believing, we are not saved for our faith; and therefore I cannot but approve of what is observed by many divines, who treat of this subject, that these graces are the way to heaven, though Christ's righteousness be the cause of our coming there⁸. I am sensible there are some who express their dislike of some of the most unexceptionable modes of speaking, if not altogether agreeable to those which they make use of, who can hardly approve of any one's asserting, that faith, and other graces, are the way to salvation; partly, because they are the beginning of salvation, and principally, because Christ styles himself, *The Way*⁹. But to this it may be replied, that though grace be glory begun, yet it may as truly be said to be the way to compleat salvation, as the traveller's setting out, and going forward on his journey, is the way to the end thereof, without which it can never be attained; and, though Christ be the way to salvation, as every thing that tends to fit us for, and bring us to it, is founded on what he did for us, as Mediator; yet this does not, in the least, overthrow the connection of grace with glory, in the method in which he brings his people to it, by first working faith, and all other graces in them, before the work is brought to perfection, or the top-stone thereof is laid.

4^{thly}. If we assert more than this, namely, that faith is a condition of the covenant of grace, or, as 'tis express'd in this *Answer*, a condition to interest believers in Christ, we must distinguish between God's bestowing the blessings of the covenant of grace, pursuant to his secret will, or his eternal purpose; and our having a visible ground, or reason, to claim an interest in them; the former of these cannot be supposed to be conditional, without making God dependent on our act; the latter may, and, I think, ought, to be deem'd so. Thus faith is a condition, or an internal qualification,

¹ Heb. xi. 6.

² Rom. viii. 32.

latter, *Causa regnandi*.

³ Eph. ii. 8.

⁴ See Pag. 238, 239.

⁵ John xiv. 6.

⁶ 1 Pet. i. 1.

⁷ Eph. i. 19.

⁸ 2 Thess. iii. 2.

⁹ The former of these is generally stiled, *Via ad regnum*; the

without

without which no one has a warrant to conclude his interest in, or lay claim to the saving blessings of the covenant of grace, so that when it is said to be a condition to interest believers in Christ, in this *Answer*, we are to understand it, as that which evinces our claim to him, or gives us ground to conclude, that we are redeemed by him, and to expect that he will bestow upon us compleat salvation. To deny this, would be to suppose, that an unbeliever has a warrant to conclude that Christ loved and gave himself for him, or that he shall be saved by him; which is a doctrine that I cannot but oppose with the greatest detestation, as what contains in it an unwarrantable presumption, and leads to licentiousness, which, I hope, nothing, that has been said on this subject, has the least tendency to do. Thus we have consider'd how faith may be said to be a condition of our laying claim to an interest in Christ; we proceed,

VII. To consider how the grace of God is glorified, in his having ordained, that we should apprehend or discern our interest in Christ, and the blessings of the covenant, by faith. Of all other graces, faith is that which has the greatest tendency to discover to the soul its own vileness, and nothingness; and, indeed, every thing that we behold in Christ its object, has a tendency to abase us in our own sight. Do we, by faith, behold Christ's fulness? This has a tendency to humble us, under a sense of our own emptiness. Do we look on Christ as the Fountain of all righteousness and strength? This leads us to see that we are destitute hereof in our selves; so that, as faith beholds all that we have, or hope for, as being founded on, and derived from Christ, and gives us hereupon the greatest sense of our own unworthiness, this is, in its own nature, adapted to advance the grace of God; and therefore God, in taking this method to apply the blessings of the covenant, requiring faith, as an instrument hereof, ordained the best expedient, to illustrate and set forth his own grace, as display'd therein. But, since 'tis a very difficult matter to believe, as this grace of faith is the gift and effect of the power of God, we are now to consider,

VIII. That the grace of the covenant is farther manifested, in that God has promised, and, pursuant thereunto, gives

his Holy Spirit to work faith, and all other graces that are connected with, or flow from it. That we have, in the covenant of grace, a promise of the Holy Spirit, to work in us that grace which God requires, is very evident; for he says, *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications*¹; and elsewhere God promises to *pour his Spirit upon their seed, and his blessing upon their offspring*²; and this is farther set forth, in a metaphorical way, when he promises to *sprinkle clean water* on his people, and that *he would cleanse them from all their filthiness, and from all their idols, and give them a new heart, and put a new spirit within them, and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh*, and all this is said to be done by *his Spirit*, which he promised to *put within them*³. And, more particularly, the Spirit, as working faith in the hearts of believers, is called, for that reason, *The Spirit of faith*⁴, and all other graces are called, *The fruit of the Spirit*⁵; so that they are from the Spirit, as the Author of all grace, and they proceed from faith, as one grace tends to excite another: Thus the heart is said to be *purified by faith*⁶, which is said also to *work by love*⁷, and hereby we are enabled to *overcome the world*; and this produces all holy obedience, which is called, *The obedience of faith*⁸. Thus concerning the Spirit's working faith, and all other graces.

Again, 'tis farther added, that the truth and sincerity of faith is evidenced, as well as the grace of faith wrought, by the Spirit; and this is also a blessing promised in the covenant of grace. Hereby we are enabled to discern our interest in Christ, and our right to all the blessings that accompany salvation; in which respect, the *secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he shews them his covenant*⁹. He not only discovers to them that there is such a dispensation of grace in general, but that they have a right to the blessings promised therein, and accordingly *seals them unto the day of redemption*¹⁰; and hereby they are enabled to walk comfortably, as knowing in whom they have believed, and, are induced to the greatest thankfulness, as those, who are under the highest obligations to God, who promises and bestows these, and all other blessings, whereby his grace is abundantly manifested in this covenant.

¹ Zech. xii. 10.

² Isai. xlv. 3.

³ Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 13.

⁵ Gal. v. 22, 23.

⁶ Acts xv. 9.

⁷ Gal. v. 6.

⁸ Rom. xvi. 26.

⁹ Psal. xxv. 14.

¹⁰ Eph. iv. 30.

380 *Of the various Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace.*

QUEST. XXXIII. *Was the covenant of grace always administer'd after one and the same manner?*

ANSW. The covenant of grace was not always administer'd after the same manner; but the administrations of it, under the Old Testament, were different from those under the New.

QUEST. XXXIV. *How was the covenant of grace administer'd under the Old Testament?*

ANSW. The covenant of grace was administer'd under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were, for that time, sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

QUEST. XXXV. *How is the covenant of grace administer'd under the New Testament?*

ANSW. Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was, and still is, to be administer'd in the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, in which grace and salvation is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.

HAVING consider'd the nature of the covenant, in which God has promised salvation to his people, and

how his grace is manifested therein, we proceed to speak concerning the various dispensations thereof, or the way in which God has been pleased, from time to time, to discover and apply the blessings contain'd in it, for the encouragement of his people to hope for salvation. This he has done, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*^c; the first method of administration was before Christ's incarnation; the other, in all succeeding ages, to continue to the end of the world. Accordingly we are led to consider,

I. How the covenant of grace was administer'd under the Old Testament. As God has always had a church in the world, in the earliest ages thereof, which has been the seat of his special presence, and been favour'd with the displays of his glory; so he has made known, and applied to them, the blessings of salvation, or the promises of this covenant, in which they are contain'd. How he has done this, is particularly consider'd in this *Answer*; in which there is something supposed, namely, that it was absolutely necessary, for the salvation of the elect, that God should, some way or other, reveal Christ to them, by whom they were to obtain remission of sins; for he was to be the Object of their faith, as well as the Fountain of their blessedness. This he could not have been, unless he had taken some methods to lead the world into the knowledge of his Person, and that work he designed to engage in, whereby they, who lived before his incarnation, might be encouraged to look for the benefits which he would procure, by what he was to do and suffer, in order thereunto. Now, that he has done so, and that the method, which he has taken therein, was sufficient to build up his elect in the faith of the promised Messiah, is what we are particularly to consider, and so shall shew,

1. That God revealed Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, to his church of old. There were two ways by which he did this; one was by express words, or an intimation given from heaven, that the Messiah, the Prince of life, should, in the fulness of time, take our nature, and dwell among us; and that what he was then to be, and do, should be conducive to the salvation of those who lived before his incarnation, as much as though he had done this from the beginning of the world; the other was,

^c Heb. i. 1.

CHRIST reveal'd of Old, by Promises and Prophecies. 381

by types, or significant ordinances, which are only different ways of discovering the same important doctrines to them.

(1.) God revealed Christ then to come to the Old Testament-church, by promises and prophecies, to the end that, tho' they were not, at that time, to behold him, as manifested in the flesh, they might take a view of him by faith, and hereby he might be render'd the object of their desire and expectation, that, when he came, it might be no unlook'd for event, but the accomplishment of those promises and predictions that related thereunto: Thus God told *Abraham*, not only that he should be blessed with a numerous offspring, but that, *in his seed*, that is, in the Messiah, who should descend from him, *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; he likewise says to *Israel*, by *Moses*, *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from among thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken*^f; and, in following ages, there were promises and predictions, that gave farther light, concerning the person and offices, the sufferings and glory of the Messiah, as it is said, *To him give all the prophets witness*^g. And the prophet *Isaiab* is so express, in the account he gives of this matter, that he is stiled, by some, the evangelical Prophet; what he says, concerning him, is so particular, as though it had been an history of what was past, rather than a prophecy of what was to come; accordingly he foretels, that he should *be born*, or *given*, as a publick blessing to the world, and describes him, not only as having *the government upon his shoulder*, but as having the perfections of the divine nature, which discover him fit for that important trust, when he stiles him, *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*^h. And, as he speaks of his birth, so he intimates, that he should be *born of a virgin*ⁱ; and he describes him, in *Chap. liii.* as condescending to bear our sins, as standing in our room and stead, designing hereby to make atonement for them; he speaks of him, as *brought like a lamb to the slaughter*, and *cut off out of the land of the living, making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*, and, after this, that *he should prolong his days*, and that the consequence hereof should be glorious to himself, and of the highest advantage to his people; and he describes him elsewhere^k, in a most ele-

gant manner, as one triumphing over conquered enemies; *travelling*, or pursuing his victories, *in the greatness of his strength*, and making it appear that he is *mighty to save*.

Another prophet speaks of him as a *Branch*, that should grow out of the root or stock of *David*, when it was almost dead and dry, and that he should set up a more glorious throne, and exercise a government over his people in a spiritual way^l. And the prophet *Micah* gives us an account of the very place of his birth, and speaks of *Bethlehem*, as render'd famous and renowned by his being born therein, *who should be a Ruler in Israel*, though otherwise it was *little among the thousands of Judah*^m. Another prophet signifies his coming at that time, when God would *shake all nations*, that is, fill the world with civil commotions, and cause it to feel the sad effects of those wars, whereby the kingdoms of the world had been dis-jointed, and many of them broken in pieces, that then *the desire of all nations should come, and fill his house*, to wit, the second temple, *with glory*ⁿ. And the prophet *Daniel* speaks of him as the *Messiah*, or Christ, the character by which he was most known, when he was here on earth, and gives a chronological account of the time when he should come, and *be cut off, though not for himself*, and hereby *confirm the covenant*, and, at the same time, *cause the sacrifice and oblation*, that is, the ordinances of the ceremonial law, *to cease*, and so make way for another dispensation of the covenant, to wit, that which we are under, which was to succeed in the room thereof.

(2.) The covenant of grace was also administer'd by the various types and ordinances of the ceremonial law, which were all significant signs of that grace, that should be display'd in the gospel, which was to be obtain'd by Christ. Many of these types and ordinances were instituted before the whole body of the ceremonial law was given from mount *Sinai*. The first we read of was that of sacrifices, which were offer'd in the first ages of the world, whereby they had an early intimation given them of the blood of the covenant, which should be shed to expiate sin. And, after this, circumcision was instituted, first given to *Abraham*, as a visible mark, or *token, of the covenant*, immediately before the birth of *Isaac*, the promised seed, at that time, when

^f Deut. xviii. 15.
ⁱ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

^g Acts x. 43.
^m Micah v. 2.

^h Isai. ix. 6.
ⁿ Hag. ii. 7.

^l Chap. vii. 14.

^k Chap. lxiii. 1, &c.

382 *The Ceremonial Law typified* CHRIST *and the Gospel.*

God was pleased to enter into covenant with him^o; and this ordinance was continued in the church, throughout all the generations thereof, till our Saviour's time, and is explain'd by the Apostle, as a sign, or *seal of the righteousness of faith*^p.

Another type was the passover, which was first instituted in commemoration of *Israel's* departure out of *Egypt*, which had in it many significant rites and ceremonies, whereby our redemption, by Christ, was set forth; upon which occasion, the Apostle calls him *our Passover, who is sacrificed for us*^q; and, in allusion hereunto, he is stiled, *The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*^r.

There were many other ceremonial ordinances, or types, which God gave to the *Jewish* nation, which were significant representations of the grace that was to be display'd in the gospel, or, as it is express'd in this *Answer*, they fore-signified Christ then to come, which contained, as the Apostle expresses it, *A shadow of good things to come*^s; so that they all pointed at the grace of the covenant, or the accomplishment of what was to be performed by Christ, after his incarnation: But this will be more particularly consider'd, when we speak of the ceremonial law, as distinguished from the moral, under a following *Answer*^t. Therefore, at present, we shall only consider the types in general, and their reference to the grace of the covenant, whereby the Old Testament-church were led into the knowledge of the Messiah then to come, together with what he was to do and suffer, to purchase and apply the blessings of this covenant to his people. And here we shall shew,

1. That there were typical ordinances under the ceremonial law. This we are obliged to maintain, against those who have advanced several things relating to the origin of the ceremonial law, which tend very much to divest it of its spirituality and glory^u, when they assert, that all the rites and ordinances thereof were derived from the *Egyptians*; and that they were first observed by them, before known and received by the church; and that the reason why God accommodated his law thereunto, was because he knew how tenacious they were of that religion, in which that generation had been trained up in *Egypt*, and how difficult it would be for them wholly to lay it aside, and

to give into another way of worship, which was altogether foreign to it: nevertheless they say, that he cut off, or separated from it, every thing that was idolatrous, and adapted other things to that mode of worship, which he thought most conducive to his glory. But though he commanded his people, when they left *Egypt*, to borrow vessels of silver and gold, to be used in that service they were to perform in the wilderness; yet, far be it from us to suppose, that God, in ordaining this law, borrowed any part thereof from them. It is true, there were rites of worship used by the *Egyptians*, and other nations, which had some affinity with the divine law, and were received by them, in common with other Heathen-nations, by tradition, from the church, in former ages; and it cannot be denied, but that the *Israelites* sometimes corrupted the worship of God, by introducing some things into it which were practised by neighbouring nations: But God gave no countenance to this matter, by accommodating his law to theirs. But since this has been purposely and largely insisted on, with much learning and judgment, by others^x, I shall pass it over.

There are others, who make farther advances on this subject, tending to overthrow that which appears to be the main design of the ceremonial law, together with the spiritual meaning of it; these not only conclude, that the main end of God's giving it to the *Jews*, was because it was necessary that there should be some form of worship erected, otherwise they would have invented one of their own, or practised that which they had received from the *Egyptians*; and the more pompous and ceremonious this form was, and especially the nearer it came to that of neighbouring nations, it would more readily be received and complied with: But, that there was no design herein to typify, or shadow forth Christ, or the blessings of the covenant of grace; these therefore were commanded duties^y, whereby the people were to be kept employ'd, but not typical ordinances. But it is very strange that any, who have read some explications hereof, occasionally mentioned in the Old Testament, and especially that large comment on the ceremonial law, given by the Apostle, in his epistle to the *Hebrews*, should embrace this opinion.

^o Gen. xvii. 9, 10.

^p Rom. iv. 11.

^q 1 Cor. v. 7.

^r John i. 29.

^s Heb. x. 1.

^t See Vol. II. Quest. XCII. Can. Chron.

^u Vid. *Spencer. de leg.*

^x Vid. *Witsii Egyptiaca.*

^y *Præcepta observantia.*

Hebr. & ejusd. Dissert. de Urim & Thummim. & Marthani

Extremes to be avoided in determining Things to be Types. 383

2. Whatever ordinances were typical, they respected Christ, his person, offices, the grace of the covenant, and the way of salvation, by him; therefore I cannot approve of what I occasionally meet with, in some ancient commentators, and other modern writers, who sometimes speak of things being typical, of other things besides Christ, and what relates to the work of redemption by him. Thus some speak of those notorious wicked persons mentioned in scripture, as *Cain*, *Pharaoh*, and others, as though they were types of the devil, and of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, as a type of Anti-christ. And others speak of some things as types of gospel-ordinances, so they call circumcision a type of baptism, and the passover of the Lord's Supper; and several writers, amongst the Papists, suppose, that the bread and wine, that was brought forth by *Melchizedek* to *Abraham*, was a type of the Eucharist, as they call that ordinance. Others speak of *Noah's* being saved in the ark from the deluge, as a type of baptism, being mislead herein by a mistaken sense of the word, used by the Apostle, when he says, having spoken before of *Noah's* being saved in the ark, *The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, &c.*^a; whereas the meaning of the Greek word^a is not that this was a type of baptism, but that it signified, as baptism also doth, that salvation, which we have by Christ.

3. When we consider what was typified by those ordinances, under the ceremonial law, we must avoid two extremes, namely, that of those who make more types, than the Holy Ghost designed in scripture; and others, who will not acknowledge many things to be types, which plainly appear to be so: The former give too great scope to their wit and fancy, when they reckon every thing to be a type, that may be adapted to Christ, and the gospel-state; and accordingly suppose many persons, and actions done by them, to be typical, which it is hard to prove, that they were designed to be so, or were looked upon as such by the Old Testament-church. Thus it would be a difficult matter to prove that *Samson* (especially in any other respect than as he was a *Nazarite*) was a type of Christ: But, if it could be proved, that the success he sometimes had in his skirmishes with the *Philistines*, was a type of Christ's victories over his and our enemies; yet it don't appear, though some have extended

the parallel so far, that his carrying the door and posts of the gate of *Gaza* to the top of a hill that is before *Hebron*^b, signifies Christ's resurrection: But it is abominable, when any one supposes, as some have unwarily done, that his loving a woman in the valley of *Sorek*, whose name was *Delilah*^c, was a type of Christ's loving the *Gentile-church*.

But, because I would not give any occasion to conclude that I have light thoughts of the performance of some, who have explain'd many things, which they call types, in scripture, with a very honest and good design, to lead the world into the knowledge of several great gospel-truths; I shall take leave to distinguish between those things, which were plainly designed, in scripture, to be types, and some other, which, tho' it don't appear that they were look'd upon as such by the Old Testament-church, yet they may be accommodated to illustrate or explain some doctrines contained in the gospel. If any one call these methods of illustration types, because there is some analogy or resemblance between them and Christ, or the benefits of the covenant, they may extend their illustrations as far as they please; I will not contend with them. It is not their saying, that such and such things are similitudes, by which Christ may be set forth; but their asserting that these similitudes were designed, by God, to be ordinances for the faith of his church, to lead them into the knowledge of Christ, that I militate against, when I suppose that some are chargeable with an extreme, in extending this matter too far, which, it is certain, many have done.

But this may give occasion to enquire; when we may determine that a thing is designed, by God, to be a type of Christ, and the grace of the covenant? To this I answer,

(1.) As to what respects persons, or, as it is commonly express'd, personal types, though I cannot say, that every one, whose life and actions bear a very great resemblance to some things that are remarkable in the life of Christ, is a type of him, in any other sense, than, as we are led, by the analogy, or resemblance of things, to speak of it, in a way of accommodation or illustration; yet we have some directions given us, by which we may conclude some persons to be types of Christ; one of which is, when he is called by their name: Thus our Saviour's being called *David*, in several

^a 1 Pet. iii. 21.

^b ἀντίτυπον.

^c Judges xvi. 3.

^d Ver. 4.

384 Rules by which we may judge of personal and real Types.

scriptures^d; and *David's* often speaking, in the Person of our Saviour, in several of his *Psalms*, seems to intimate, that he was looked upon, by the church in his day, as a type of Christ.

Again, *Moses* seems to imply as much concerning himself, when he speaks of Christ, as a *Prophet*, whom the Lord God should raise up from among their brethren; and he adds, that he should be like unto him, and consequently typified by him^e; and the Apostle seems to intimate as much, when he compares *Moses* and Christ together, in point of faithfulness, that *the one was faithful, as a servant* in God's house, the other as a *Son over his own house*^f.

Again, when any remarkable actions were done by persons mentioned in scripture, which were allowed to be typical, it follows, from thence, that the person, who was appointed to be God's minister in doing them, was a type of Christ. Thus we may conclude *Joshua* to have been reckoned, by *Israel*, a type of Christ, in leading them into the land of *Canaan*, upon the same ground that they had to look upon that land, as a type of the gospel-rest, which we are brought to by Christ. And, for the same reason, *Solomon* might be called a type of Christ, as he built the temple, which was reckoned, by the *Jews*, as a type of God's presence, in a way of grace with his people; and there are other passages, that might be refer'd to in scripture, which farther prove him to be a type of Christ^g.

And nothing is more evident, than that the priests, under the law, who were ministers in holy things, and the High Priest, in a way of eminency, were types of Christ; they are so consider'd in the explication thereof given, in the epistle to the *Hebrews*; and they farther appear to be so, inasmuch as the church had sufficient ground to conclude, that their ministry was typical, or the gifts, or sacrifices, that they offer'd, were types of what was offer'd by Christ for our redemption. And this leads us,

(2.) To consider those types, which are called real, or things done, as being ordinances designed to signify the grace of the covenant. These were either occasional, or stated; the former whereof were designed for types, at those times, when the things were perform'd: But it don't appear that they were so afterwards, in succeeding ages; as their *passing through*

the red sea, being under the cloud, their *eating manna* in the wilderness, and *drinking water* that came out of the rock. All these things are expressly mentioned, by the Apostle, as types^h; and we may add thereto, *the brazen serpent*, which was plainly a type of Christ, and, as such, our Saviour applies it to himself, in *John* iii. 14. But all these were occasional types, which were ordinances to the church no longer than the action was continued.

Again, there were other things, which seem'd to be standing types, or ordinances, in all successive ages, till Christ, the Anti-type, came, as circumcision, the passover, sacrifices, and other rites of worship, used in the temple-service; these things being expressly mentioned, in scripture, as types, we have ground to determine them to be so. Thus concerning the covenant of grace, as revealed to the church of old.

2. We are now to consider, that the method which God took in the administration of the covenant of grace, under the Old Testament, was sufficient to build up his elect in the faith of the promised Messiah. There were, indeed, many types given to the church, but these would not have led them into the knowledge of Christ, and salvation to be obtained by him, unless God had taken some method to explain them; for they had not a natural tendency to signify Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, as words have, according to the common sense thereof, to make known the *Ideas* they convey: But their signification was, for the most part, if not altogether, instituted, or annex'd, to them, by the divine appointment, and many of them had not the least resemblance, in themselves, of what they were ordain'd to signify; therefore it was necessary that they should be explained. For we may say the same thing of a type, that is said of a parable, as they are both figurative representations of some less known *Ideas*, that are designed to be convey'd thereby; now a parable is stiled, by the Psalmist, *A dark saying*ⁱ; and, by the prophet *Ezekiel*, *A riddle*^k; and our Saviour, speaking thereof, in this sense, tells his disciples, that *unto them it was given, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables*^l; and they are elsewhere opposed to a plain way of speaking, as when the disciples say, *Now speakest thou plainly,*

^d Hof. iii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

^e Deut. xviii. 15.

^f Heb. iii. 2, 5, 6.

^g See *Psal.* lxxii. the

title, compared with the subject-matter of the *Psalms*, which speaks of Christ in the person of *Solomon*.

^h 1 Cor.

x. 1, 3, 4. compared with *Ver.* 11.

ⁱ *Psal.* lxxviii. 2.

^k Ezek. xvii. 2.

^l Luke viii. 10.

and

The Jews; how led into the spiritual Meaning of the Types. 385

and speakest no proverb, or parable^m, as it is render'd in the margin; so when Nathan reproved David for his sin, in the matter of Uriah, he first represented it by a parable, taken from *the rich man's robbing the poor man* of his ew-lamb, which before he explain'd, the meaning of it was not understood by himⁿ: But when he told him, *Thou art the man* intended hereby, it was as evident to him, as though he had made use of the most significant words relating to this matter. The same may be said concerning types under the Old Testament-dispensation; they would have been unintelligible, had there been no explication annexed to them, whereby the spiritual meaning thereof might be understood. And, if we consider them as a part of religious worship, we cannot suppose that that consisted only in some bodily exercises, such as killing of beasts, sprinkling the blood, &c. for that is no part of religion, any otherwise than as it refers to, and leads the faith of those, who are engaged therein, into the knowledge of some things, in which 'tis more immediately concern'd.

But this argument having been insisted on elsewhere^o, and the necessity of God's leading his church into the meaning of the ceremonial law, having been considered and proved, from the divine goodness, and a brief account having been given of the method which God took to lead them into it, which tends to obviate any objection that might be made against it, we shall only observe, at present, that as there is a very clear explication given hereof, in several places of the New Testament, so there are some expressions used in the Old, which seem to refer to the spiritual meaning thereof; and, if it be allowed that the church had then the least intimation given them, either by some hints, contained in scripture, or by some other methods of revealing it, that there was a spiritual meaning affix'd thereunto, which it is plain there was, then it will follow, that they might easily, from this general direction, have applied this to particular instances, and have attained a very great degree of the knowledge of the spiritual meaning of these types and ordinances.

That this may farther appear, let it be consider'd, that they were led into several doctrines relating to the Messiah, and the offices that he was to execute as Mediator, by express words, which they

must be given up to a very great degree of judicial blindness, as the Jews are at this day, if they could not understand thereby many of those great truths, which relate to the way of salvation by Christ. Now, if they were led into them, by this more plain method, they might easily accommodate the typical ordinances thereunto, and accordingly the one would be a key to the other: Thus, when they were told of the Messiah's *bearing the iniquity* of his people, as the prophet *Isaiah* does, or of *the Lord's laying on him the iniquity of us all*^p, they might easily understand that the same thing was signified by some rites used in sacrificing, as when the priest was to lay his hand on the head of the sacrifice, before he slew it, and its being, upon this occasion, said *to bear the iniquity of the congregation*^q; therefore they could not be at a loss, as to the spiritual meaning thereof. And, when we read elsewhere such expressions, as plainly refer to the thing signified, by some ceremonial ordinances, viz. *The circumcision of the heart*^r, *The calves of the lips*^s, *The sacrifice of thanksgiving*^t, and many other passages of the like nature, it cannot reasonably be supposed that they were wholly strangers to it; and therefore these types and ordinances were, in an objective way, sufficient to build them up in the faith of the Messiah.

This being consider'd, it may very evidently be infer'd, from hence, that they had full remission of sins, and eternal life, as it is farther observed; and therefore it is not necessary to suppose, with some of the *Pelagians* and *Socinians*, that they might be saved without the knowledge of Christ; nor, with the *Papists*, that they were incapable of salvation, till Christ came and preached to them after his death, and so discharged them from the prison, in which they were detain'd; nor with some among the *Protestants*, who extend the bondage of the Old Testament-church so far, as though they were not fully justified, but lay under a perpetual dread of the wrath of God, and so had not compleat forgiveness. This we often meet with in the writings of many, who, in other respects, explain the doctrine of the covenant of grace in a very unexceptionable way. And here I cannot but observe, what is well known, by those who live in the *United Netherlands*, that this matter has been debated with so much warmth in those parts, that

^m John xvi. 29.

ⁿ 2 Sam. xii. 1—6.

^o See Pag. 21, 22.

^p Isai. liii. 4, 6.

^q Lev. iv. 4.

compared with Chap. xvi. 21, 22.

^r Deut. xxx. 6.

^s Hof. xiv. 2.

^t Psal. cxvi. 17.

386 *The Sentiments of Cocceius, and his Followers,*

it has occasioned divisions and misunderstandings among divines, who, in other respects, have adhered to, and well defended the doctrines of the gospel, against those who have opposed them. The judicious and learned *Cocceius*, whom I cannot but mention with the greatest respect, who lived about the middle of the last *Century*, has been, and is now, followed by many divines, in those particular modes of explaining this doctrine, which he makes use of: His sentiments, indeed, about this matter, were not wholly new; but having written commentaries on several parts of scripture, he takes occasion to explain great numbers of texts, agreeably to that particular scheme, which he maintains; and while, on the one hand, he runs great lengths, in explaining what he reckons to be scripture-types and predictions, and thereby gives great scope to his wit and fancy; on the other hand, he extends the terror, bondage, and darkness, which the church was under, during the legal dispensation, farther than can well be justified, and advances several things in defending and explaining his scheme, which many divines, who do not give into his way of thinking, have excepted against.

Instead of making but two dispensations of the covenant of grace, according to the commonly receiv'd opinion, he supposes, that there were three^u, namely, the *first* from God's giving the promise to our first parents, immediately after they fell, relating to the seed of the woman that should break the serpent's head, to his delivering the law from mount *Sinai*; which dispensation had nothing of terror, or bondage, in it, any more than the dispensation which we are under; and he supposes, that the church had clearer discoveries of Christ, and the blessings of the covenant, than they had after *Moses's* time. The *second* dispensation was, that which took place when God gave *Israel* the law from mount *Sinai*, which he generally describes as a yoke, which they could hardly bear; and sometimes as a curse, a rigorous dispensation, in which there was a daily remembrance of sin; and the reason of God's exercising this severity, and shutting them up in a judicial way, under terror, darkness, and bondage, was because they revolted from him, by worshipping the golden calf, a little before the law was given; upon

which occasion, God put a vail upon his ordinances, covered the mysteries of the gospel by types, and, at the same time, did not lead them into the meaning thereof, which, as was before observed, would have a tendency to leave them in a state of darkness, as to the great doctrines that were signified by these types and ordinances of the ceremonial law. And this he supposes to be the meaning of what the Apostle says, concerning the double vail; one put on the things themselves, the other on the hearts of the *Jews*; and both these were typified by the *vail*, which *Moses put over his face*^x; and this darkness was attended with distress, and terror of conscience, whereby they were, as the Apostle says elsewhere, *All their life-time subject to bondage*^y, which they explain, concerning the church of the *Jews*, under the legal dispensation. And they add, that all this continued as long as that dispensation lasted, or till it was succeeded by the *third*, viz. the gospel-dispensation, which we are under, whereby the church was deliver'd from this yoke, which neither *they, nor their fathers, were able to bear*. But that which I would take occasion to except against, in this scheme, is,

1. They seem to make the terror, bondage, and darkness, which the church was under, greater than they ought to do; for, I humbly conceive, all those scriptures, which they refer to for the proof hereof, are to be taken, not in an absolute, but a comparative sense. 'Tis one thing to say, that this dispensation was less bright and comfortable, than the present dispensation, which we are under, is; and another thing to say, that it was so dark and comfortless, as they generally represent it to be.

2. I cannot but think, as I have before observed, that the church of *Israel* had a clearer discerning of the meaning of the ordinances of the ceremonial law, than these divines will allow them to have had; or, at least, that the vail, that was upon their hearts, principally respected a part of them, and that in some particular ages, not in every age of the *Jewish* church; for some of the Old Testament-saints seem to have discover'd a great degree of light in the doctrines of the gospel, as appears more especially from several of the *Psalms* of *David*, and some of the writings of the prophets.

^u The first he and his followers call, *Oeconomia promissionis*, or *ante-legalis*; the second, *Oeconomia legalis*; the third, *Oeconomia evangelica*.

^x 2 Cor. iii. 13—15.

^y Heb. ii. 15.

About the Bondage and Darknes of the legal Dispensation. 387

3. Whatever degree of judicial blindness and darknes the church of the *Jews* might be exposed to for sin, it does not so fully appear that this was inflicted as a punishment on them, for worshipping the golden calf at the foot of mount *Sinai*: But there were several instances of idolatry and apostacy from God, that gave occasion thereunto, which, when they repented of, and were reformed from, the effects of his wrath were taken away; therefore we are not to suppose, that the ceremonial law was given, at first, as a yoke, or curse, laid on them for this sin in particular.

4. We are not to extend the bondage and darknes thereof so far, with respect to any of them, as to suppose, that, under that dispensation, they had not full remission of sin; for the contrary hereto seems to be contained in several scriptures, as when 'tis said, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*^a; and, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be fear'd*^a; and elsewhere, *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, to all that call upon thee; and thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin*^b; and elsewhere, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*^c.

These, and such-like scriptures, seem so plainly to overthrow this part of their scheme, that they are obliged, in defence thereof, to understand them all, as containing nothing else, but a prediction of that blessedness, which the New Testament-church should receive, and not as a privilege that was enjoy'd under the legal dispensation, which I cannot but think to be an evasive perversion of the sense

of those scriptures, but now refer'd to, and others of the like nature; for it is plain that the Apostle, referring to one of them, to wit, the words of the Psalmist, in *Rom. iv. 6.* compared with *Ver. 9.* says, that therein David describes the blessedness that cometh not on the circumcision only, that is, not only on the *Jews*, but on the *uncircumcision also*, that is, the gospel-church; which is a plain argument, that this blessedness, that accompanies forgiveness, was a privilege, that the Old Testament-church enjoy'd, and not barely a promise of what the New Testament-church was to expect, *q. d.* Was the Old Testament-church the only blessed persons in enjoying forgiveness? No, says he, as they formerly enjoy'd it, we, who believe, are made partakers of the same privilege.

And to this we may add, that, in consistency with this scheme, they entertain some unwarrantable notions about the justification of the Old Testament-church. Some say, that it was less full; others, which is a more unguarded way of speaking, that it was less true^d; and, agreeably hereunto, they suppose, that they had no other Ideas of the doctrine of justification, but as implying in it the divine forbearance, or not punishing sin; though they had a perpetual dread that it would be punish'd at last, and no comfortable sense of the forgiveness thereof^e. But this is certainly an extending the terror and bondage of that dispensation farther than we have just ground, from scripture, to do, whatever turns they give to several scriptures in defence thereof; and therefore we must conclude, as it is observed in this Answer, that the Old Testament-church had full remission of sins, as well as eternal salvation.

II. We are now to consider the covenant of grace, as administer'd under the New Testament, which is the dispensation thereof, that we are under, and is to continue to the end of the world, which, by way of eminency, we call the

^a Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.

^a Psal. cxxx. 4.

^b Psal. lxxxvi. 5. and lxxxv. 2.

^c Micah vii. 18, 19.

^d *Minus plena, or minus vera.*

^e For the proof of this, they often refer to that scripture, in *Rom. iii. 25.* in which 'tis said, *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through, or after, the forbearance of God*, which they suppose to contain an intimation of the privilege which the gospel-church enjoy'd, namely, remission of sins; whereas, under the legal dispensation, there was nothing else apprehended by them, but the forbearance of God; so that the Old Testament-church had *παρεσις ἀμαρτιῶν*; the New Testament-church, *ἀφεσις*; and they all suppose, that they look'd upon Christ as *Fide-jussor*, and not *Expromissor*, which are terms used in the civil law; the former of which signifies a person's undertaking to be a surety, and, at the same time, leaving the creditor at his liberty to exact the debt, either of him, or the debtor himself; whereas, *Expromissor* signifies, a person's undertaking to be a surety, in so full and large a sense, as that, by virtue hereof, the debtor is discharged. Therefore, since they did not, so clearly, know that God would discharge them, by virtue of Christ's undertaking to be a Surety, but concluding that he might exact the debt, either of him, or them; this was the foundation of that terror and bondage, which they were perpetually subject to.

gospel-dispensation; concerning which, it is observed,

1. That it began when Christ, the Substance, was exhibited. He is called the *Substance* thereof, without any particular limitation of the word; and therefore we may understand thereby, either that he was the Substance of the ceremonial law, as all the promises and types thereof had a peculiar reference to him; and, as the Apostle says, *To him give all the prophets witness*^f; or else he may be consider'd as the Substance of the New Testament-dispensation, the subject-matter of the ministry of the gospel. Thus the Apostle speaks of *Christ crucified*, as the principal thing which *he determined to know*, or insist on, in the exercise of his ministry, and that with good reason, since all gospel-doctrines were designed to lead us to him, and set forth his glory, as the Fountain and Author of our salvation^g. And both the seals of the new covenant, namely, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, signify that salvation which we enjoy, or hope for, by Christ, our consecration to him, and communion with him: Thus he is truly stiled the substance of both the dispensations of the covenant; the former look'd forward, and pointed out Christ to come, as the Object of the church's desire and expectation; the latter represents him as being come, and so the Object of our joy and thankfulness, for the blessings which he has procur'd for us.

And this leads us to consider when it was that the New Testament-dispensation commenced, which is here said to be upon Christ's being exhibited. Christ's exhibition implies in it, either his publick appearing when he was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, or else it has a particular respect to the time when he first enter'd on his publick ministry, and went about doing good, confirming his mission by uncontested miracles: This he did immediately after his baptism, whereby he appear'd to be the Person, whose coming the prophets had foretold, and whom *John the Baptist* had pointed at, and given the world ground to expect that he would immediately shew himself, in a publick manner to them, which he did accordingly. This appearing of Christ, was like the sun's rising after a night of darkness, and therefore, in some respects, the gospel-dispensation might be said to begin then; nevertheless, in propriety of speaking, it could not be said fully to

commence till Christ's resurrection: Then it was that the ceremonial law ceased, all the types and ordinances thereof having had their accomplishment in him. Thus the prophet *Daniel* speaks first of Christ's *being cut off*, and thereby *confirming the covenant*, and then of the *sacrifice and oblation's ceasing*^h; and, when that dispensation was at an end, the gospel-dispensation immediately succeeded it. We are now to consider,

2. How these two dispensations differ. They were, indeed, the same for substance, both before and since the coming of Christ, as was before observed, when we consider'd that the covenant of grace, notwithstanding the different dispensations thereof, is but one. And this farther appears, in that the blessings promised therein were the same, to wit, redemption through the blood of Christ, and compleat salvation by him. He was the Mediator and Fountain of all that happiness which his people enjoy'd, either before or after his incarnation; nevertheless, the way of administering this covenant, under the gospel-dispensation, differs from its former way.

(1.) In that it was, before this, predicted and signified, that Christ should come, and therefore the Old Testament-church waited for his appearing; and accordingly they are represented as saying, *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether*ⁱ: But the New Testament-church adores and magnifies him, as having appear'd to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, and fully accomplish the work of our redemption thereby; and, in the preaching of the gospel, he is represented as *having abolish'd death, and brought life and immortality to light*, and done every thing for us that is necessary to bring about our redemption. And this is also signified by the sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which, though they may be justly called gospel-types, or external signs of Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace; yet they differ from the types under the ceremonial law, not only in the matter of them; but in that they refer to the work of redemption, as fully accomplish'd by him, which the ceremonial law could not, from the nature of the thing, be said to have done.

(2.) The gospel-dispensation differs from the legal, and very much excels it,

^f Acts x. 43.

^g 1 Cor. i. 23. Chap. ii. 2.

^h Dan. ix. 26, 27.

ⁱ Cant. ii. 17.

How the Gospel-Dispensation excelleth the Legal in Glory. 389

as grace and salvation is therein held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations. This is founded on what the Apostle says ^k, when comparing the two dispensations together, he calls one *the ministration of death, or condemnation*, and describes it, as that which is now *done away*, which, while it continued, was *glorious*; the other he calls *the ministration of the Spirit, or of righteousness*, and speaks of it, as *excelling in glory*. Whether the former is stiled, *The ministration of death*, because of the terrible manner in which the law was given from mount *Sinai*, upon which occasion the people said to *Moses*, *Let not God speak with us*, in such a way, *any more, lest we die*; or whether it respects the many curses and threatnings, denounced in that dispensation, to deter the people from sin, we will not determine: But it is certain, that the Apostle speaks of the gospel-dispensation, as excelling in glory, which is the principal thing we are now to consider, and this it might be said to do.

1. As grace and salvation are therein held forth with greater clearness or evidence. This we may truly say, without supposing the legal dispensation to be so dark, as that none of the church, in any age thereof, could see Christ, and the way of salvation by him, to be signified by any of its types or ordinances. We may observe, that, when the Apostle speaks of this dispensation, he does not say absolutely that it had no glory, but that *it had no glory in this respect, by reason of*, or compared with, *the glory that excelleth*. Now the gospel-dispensation excels the legal, as to its clearness, or fulness of evidence, in that the accomplishment of the predictions, or the making good of the promises of redemption and salvation by Christ, affords greater evidence of the truth and reality of these blessings, than the bare giving the promises could be said to do; for though one gave them the expectation, the other put them into the actual possession thereof, when Christ, the Substance, was, as was before observed, exhibited, and the ceremonial law had its accomplishment in him.

2. Under the gospel-dispensation, grace and salvation revealed therein, are attended with greater efficacy; for as the greatest part of the Old Testament-church

were not so much disposed, as they ought, especially in some ages thereof, to enquire into, or endeavour to attain a clearer discerning of the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial institutions, through the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, so the effect and consequence hereof was answerable thereunto, inasmuch as there was but a small remnant of them, who obtain'd mercy to be faithful, who rejoiced to see Christ's day, and embraced the promises which they beheld afar off; whereas, in the gospel-dispensation, *the word of the Lord had free course, and was more eminently glorified* in those places where it was made known: But this will farther appear, if we consider,

3. That it excelled in glory, in regard of the extent thereof; for it was under this dispensation that that promise was to have its accomplishment, that Christ should be *a light to the Gentiles*, and God's *salvation unto the end of the earth*¹; or that God would *destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that was spread over all nations*^m: 'Twas then that a commission was given *to preach the gospel to every creature*ⁿ, or that Christ should be *preached unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world*^o. In this respect, the gospel-dispensation certainly excelleth in glory, and it is owing hereunto that we enjoy, at present, this invaluable privilege. But if this present dispensation be only reckon'd the dawn and twilight, or the beginning of that glory that shall be revealed at Christ's second coming, as grace is sometimes stiled glory begun; or if the Apostle's description of it, when he says, that *we are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*^p, contains an intimation, that the glory, which still remains to be revealed, is nothing else but the perfection of this present dispensation, then we may conclude that it far excelleth all others in glory.

From what has been said, in comparing the former and present dispensation of the covenant of grace, we may infer,

(1.) The care of God extended to his church, in all the ages thereof; so that he never left them without the means of grace, which, how various soever they have been as to the matter of them, have

^k 2 Cor. iii. 7—11.
^p Heb. xii. 22, 23.

¹ Isai. xlix. 6.

^m Chap. xxv. 7.

ⁿ Mark xvi. 15.

^o 1 Tim. iii. 16.

390 *Of the MEDIATOR of the Covenant of Grace.*

yet tended to answer the same end, namely, the leading the church into the knowledge of Christ.

(2.) We may farther infer the necessity of external and visible worship, which the church was never wholly destitute of, for then it would have ceased to have been a church; and also the necessity of divine revelation, as to what respects the way of salvation by Christ; and therefore we must not conclude, that the church was, at any time, without some beams of gospel-light shining into it, or that they were left, as the Heathen are, *to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him*, as the Apostle speaks^a; or that, before the gospel-dispensation commenced, salvation was to be obtain'd, by adhering to the light and dictates of nature, which discovers nothing of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, or of that remission of sin, which is only to be obtained through him.

(3.) Christ's having been revealed to, and consequently known by the Old Testament-church, as the promised *Messiah*, may give some light to our understanding what we often read in the New Testament, concerning persons believing in him, upon his working of miracles, or using some other methods to convince them that he was the *Messiah*, when, at the same time, we don't read of any particular discovery made to them relating to the glory of his Person, and offices, and the design of his coming into the world, which was necessary to their believing him, in a saving way, to be the *Messiah*. Thus when he converted the woman of *Samaria*, by revealing himself to be *that Prophet*, whom the church expected, when he told her some of the secret actions of her life, she immediately believed in him^r, and many of her fellow-citizens believed on him, upon the report that she gave them hereof^t: and, when he opened the eyes of the man that was born blind, he only ask'd him this question, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* and then discovers that he was the Person; and it immediately follows, that *he believed and worshipped him*^t. And there were many other instances of the like nature in the New Testament, in which persons believed in Christ, before he gave them a particular account of his design in coming into the world, barely upon his working miracles, which gave them a conviction that he was the *Messiah*;

whereas faith supposes not only a conviction that Christ is the *Messiah*, but a knowledge of his Person, and the offices he was to execute as such. This may very easily be accounted for, by supposing that the *Jews* had been before instructed in this matter, and therefore they wanted no new discoveries hereof; accordingly they believed in him, and worshipped him, as being induced hereunto, by those intimations that were given to them, under the Old Testament-dispensation, that the *Messiah*, whenever he appear'd, would be the Object of faith and worship.

(4.) Since the gospel is more clearly preached under this present dispensation, than it was before; this tends to aggravate the sin of those who despise Christ, as revealed therein, as our Saviour says, *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*^u. Before our Saviour's incarnation, the Old Testament-church might be said to reject the covenant of promise, or not regard the gospel contained therein; but, under the New Testament-dispensation, sinners reject the covenant of grace, as confirmed, ratified, and sealed, by the blood of Christ; and, as the Apostle says, *Count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and therefore are thought worthy of much sorer punishment*^x.

QUEST. XXXVI. *Who is the Mediator of the covenant of grace?*

ANSW. The only Mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and Man in two entire distinct natures, and one Person for ever.

QUEST. XXXVII. *How did Christ, being God, become Man?*

ANSW. Christ, the Son of God, became Man by taking to him-

^a Acts xvii. 27.
^x Heb. x. 29.

^r John iv. 18, 19, 29.

^t Ver. 39.

^u John ix. 35, 37, 38.

^u John iii. 19.

CHRIST *the only Mediator between God and Men.* 391

self a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

NEXT to the covenant of grace, and its various administrations, we have, in some following *Answers*, an account of the Mediator thereof, who is set forth in the glory of his Person; the offices that he executes, and the estate in which he either was, or is, together with those accessions of glory, with which he shall perform the last part of his work in the close of time. The first thing to be consider'd, is the constitution of his Person, as God-man, Mediator; and here,

I. He is set forth as the only Mediator of the covenant of grace. How we are to understand his being Mediator, has been already consider'd^y; and it was observed, that he did not make peace, by intreating, that God would remit the debt, without giving that satisfaction, which was necessary to be made, for the securing the glory of the divine justice. Herein we militate against the *Socinians*, who suppose him to be stiled a Mediator, only because he made known unto the world those new laws contained in the gospel, which we are obliged to obey, as a condition of God's being reconciled to us; and giving us a pattern of obedience in his conversation; and, in the close thereof, confirming his doctrine by his death; and then interceding with God, that, on these terms, he would accept of us, without any regard to the glory of his justice, which he is no farther concerned about, than by prevailing that it would desist from the demands which it might have made, and so pardon sin without satisfaction: But this is directly contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, which represents him as *giving his life a ransom for many*^z; upon which account 'tis said he *made peace through the blood of his cross*^a; and that *God brought him again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, as the God of peace*^b, and, at the same time, appeared to be a God of infinite holiness and justice, and Christ a Mediator of satisfaction: But this will

be farther consider'd, when we speak concerning his *Priestly Office*^c.

That which we shall, at present, observe is, that he is stiled the *only Mediator*: Thus 'tis said, *There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*^d. In this we oppose the *Papists*, who greatly derogate from the glory of Christ, by pretending that the angels, and glorified saints, are Mediators of intercession, and that they not only offer up supplications to God in the behalf of men here on earth; but with them they present their own merits, as though Christ's redemption and intercession had not been sufficient without them; and accordingly a great part of their worship consists in desiring that these good offices may be perform'd by them, on their behalf, which I cannot but conclude to be a breach of the *First*, or, at least, let them put never so fair colours upon it, of the *Second Commandment*; which will be farther consider'd in its proper place.

The scriptures they bring, in defence of this practice, are nothing to their purpose. For whenever an angel is said to intercede for men, as 'tis expressed, *The angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah*^e? or to be the Object of their prayers, or supplications, as *Jacob* says, *The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*^f, no other person is intended hereby but Christ, *the angel of the covenant*. Another scripture, which they bring to the same purpose, is that, in which *Moses* says, *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants*^g, which they miserably pervert; for *Moses* does not desire that God would hear the prayers that these saints made to him in the behalf of his church: but that he would remember the covenant that he made with them, and so accomplish the promises thereof, by bestowing the blessings that his people then stood in need of.

And there are two other scriptures that are often cited, by the *Papists*, to this purpose, which, they think, can hardly be taken in any other sense; one is in *Rev. v. 8.* where 'tis said, that *the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints*; and the other is in *Chap. viii. 3.* *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a*

golden

^y See *Pag.* 324.
^d 1 Tim. ii. 5.

^z Matt. xx. 28.
^e Zech. i. 12.

^a Col. i. 20.
^f Gen. xlviii. 16.

^b Heb. xiii. 20.
^g Exod. xxxii. 13.

^c See *Quest.* XLIV.

392 *Saints and Angels no Mediators ; against the Papists.*

golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. It must be allowed, that there are many passages, in this book, which are hard to be understood ; but there are none contrary to the analogy of faith, or derogatory to the glory of Christ, as the sense they give of these scriptures is ; and therefore we must enquire ; whether they may not be understood otherwise by us ? 'Tis said, indeed, *the four beasts, and four and twenty elders, had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints* ; but 'tis not fully determined whether, by these *beasts and elders*, are intended the inhabitants of heaven, or men on earth. If 'tis only an emblematical representation of those prayers that are directed to God from the church in this world, 'tis nothing to their purpose. But we will suppose that, by *these beasts and elders*, here spoken of, who *fell down before the Lamb*, is meant the inhabitants of heaven : Nevertheless, we are not to understand, that they are represented as praying for the saints here on earth ; for *the golden vials full of odours*, are only an emblem of the prayers that are put up by the saints here on earth, which God accepts of, or smells a sweet savour in, as perfumed with the odours of Christ's righteousness. This may be illustrated by those political emblems, that are used in publick solemnities ; such as the coronation of Kings, in which the *Regalia* are carried by the prime ministers of state, not to signify that they have any branch of kingly dignity belonging to them : But the whole ceremony is expressive of his honours and prerogatives, who is the principal subject thereof ; so when the heavenly inhabitants are represented, in this vision, in such a way, as they are here described, it only signifies, that the prayers, which are put up by God's people here on earth, through the mediation of Christ, are graciously heard and answer'd by him.

As for the other scripture, in which 'tis said, *Another Angel stood at the Altar, and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints*, that is generally understood, by those who do not give into this absurd opinion of the *Papists*, as spoken of our Saviour, and then it makes nothing to their purpose, but rather militates against it. But if it be objected, to this sense of the

text ; that our Saviour cannot properly be called *another Angel*, and therefore it must be meant of one of the created angels ; the sense but now given of the foregoing scripture may be accommodated to it, and so the meaning is ; this Angel, or one of the angels, *stood at the altar before the Lamb*, and, in an emblematical way, is set forth, as having incense put into his hand, which he presents to him ; not as offering it up himself, but as signifying that it was for the sake of Christ's merits, that the prayers of his people, here on earth, ascended with acceptance in the sight of God. And 'tis as tho' he should say to Christ, " The incense is thine, " thou hast a right to the glory thereof ; " and therefore let all know, that this " is the only foundation of the church's " hope, that their wants shall be supplied " by thee." So that this does not give the least countenance to the *Papish* doctrine, of there being other mediators between God and man besides our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of the *Papists*, indeed, are sensible that this opinion tends to detract from the glory of our great Mediator, and therefore they chuse rather to assert, that the saints and angels are mediators between Christ and men, so that we are, through their means, to have access to him, and, by him, to the Father : But, since Christ not only condescended to take our nature upon him, and therein to procure redemption for us ; but invited his people to *come to him* ; and since 'tis said, *through him we have an access unto the Father*^h ; and no mention is made of any, by whom we have access to Christ, and our access to God is founded only in his blood, we have nothing else to do, but, by faith, in what he has done and suffer'd, to draw nigh to God, as to a Father, reconciled by this great and only Mediator.

II. This Mediator is described, as to his Person, as God incarnate, or, as 'tis express'd, the eternal Son of God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, who became Man, and that, in the most proper sense, by assuming to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, which are the two constituent parts of man. Here we are to consider,

1. The Person assuming the human nature : He is stiled, the eternal Son of God, of one substance with the Father, and, with respect to his personality, equal

^h Eph. ii. 18.

with himⁱ. This is the same mode of speaking that was used by the *Nicene Fathers*, in defence of our Saviour's divinity against the *Arians*, which we have largely insisted on, in our defence of the *Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity*^k; and having also explained what we mean by Christ's *Sonship*, as referring to his Person and character, as Mediator, we shall add no more on that subject at present, but take it for granted, that our Saviour is, in the most proper sense, a divine Person, and shall consider him as assuming the human nature; accordingly we may observe,

(1.) That it was the second Person in the Godhead who was incarnate, and not the Father nor the Holy Ghost. This we affirm against the *Sabellians*, who deny the distinct personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and assert, that the Father, or the Holy Ghost, might as truly be said to have been incarnate, as the Son, since their personality, according to them, is not so distinct, as that what is done by one divine Person, might not be said to have been done by another^l.

(2.) It follows from hence, that the divine nature, which belongs in common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, cannot be properly said to have been incarnate. 'Tis true, we read, that *God was manifest in the flesh*^m; and elsewhere, that *in him*, namely in the human nature, *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead*ⁿ; from whence some take occasion to conclude, that the human nature was united to the Godhead, or that the Godhead of Christ was said to be incarnate: But, if this be asserted, it must be with caution and a distinction. I cannot therefore suppose, that the Godhead absolutely consider'd; but as including in it the *Idea* of its subsisting in the Person of the Son, was incarnate; which is very well expressed, when we say, that the human nature was united to the second Person in the Godhead, rather than to the Godhead it self.

(3.) Christ being farther consider'd, as the eternal Son of God; it follows, from hence, that he existed before his incarnation, which has been largely insisted on, under a foregoing *Answer*, in defence of Christ's proper deity. In this we oppose not only the *Socinians*, who deny that he existed before he was conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin; but also

the *Arians*, especially those of them who take occasion to explain, without disguise, or ambiguity of words, what they mean when they speak of him, as being before time, which comes infinitely short of what is intended by his being stiled God's eternal Son, and so existing with him before time. Thus we have an account of the Person assuming the human nature.

2. We are now to consider the nature assumed, or united to the divine Person, which was an human nature, consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul; so that as Christ is, in one nature, God equal with the Father, in the other he is Man, made, in all the essential properties of the human nature, like unto us. Here we may consider,

(1.) That, since this is a matter of pure revelation, we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to assert, that our Saviour is both God and man. Many of the scriptures, that have been before refer'd to, to prove his deity, expressly attribute to him a human, as well as a divine nature, and speak of the same Person as both God and Man; as when God stiles him, *The Man that is my Fellow*^o; or, when he, who is *Jehovah, our righteousness*, is also described as *a Branch, raised unto David*^p, that is, of the seed of David; or, as the Apostle says, he, *who is over all, God blessed for ever, was of the Fathers concerning the flesh*, or his human nature^q. Moreover, when we read of the same Person as stiled, *The mighty God*, and yet *a Child born unto us, a Son given*^r, or of the same Person's being called *Emmanuel, God with us*, and yet *born of a Virgin*^s; or, when we read of the *Word's being made flesh, and dwelling among us*; and elsewhere, being called *the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord*, and yet *made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*^t; or, *God manifest in the flesh*^u. These, and many other scriptures, as plainly prove him to be Man, as they do that he is God^x. And, indeed, the arguments to prove his humanity, taken from thence, are not so much contested, as those that respect his proper deity; and therefore, if these scriptures prove him to be God, they contain as strong and conclusive arguments to prove him to be Man, so that the bare mention of them is

ⁱ See Pag. 117.

^k See *Quest.* IX, X, XI.

^l For this reason, the *Sabellians* are often called, by ancient

writers, *Patripassians*.

^m 1 Tim. iii. 16.

ⁿ Col. ii. 9.

^o Zech. xiii. 7.

^p Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

^q Rom. ix. 5.

^r Isai. ix. 6.

^s Isai. vii. 14. compared with Matt. i. 23.

^t Rom. i. 3.

^u 1 Tim. iii. 16.

^x See the same scriptures, and others to the like purpose, before cited, for the proof of Christ's proper deity, under *Quest.* IX, X, XI. Pag. 143, 144, 145, 147. and also what has been said concerning his Sonship, as implying him to be God-man Mediator, Pag. 124, &c.

394 *Two distinct Natures in CHRIST, but not two Persons.*

sufficient, especially when we consider, as it cannot be denied, that all these scriptures speak of the same Person; therefore,

(2.) When Christ is said to be both God and Man, it does not imply that there are two Persons in the Mediator; and accordingly it is said, in the *Answer* we are explaining, that though these natures are distinct, yet the Person, who has them, is but one. This is to be maintained against those who entertain favourable thoughts of that ancient heresy, first broached by *Nestorius*^y, whose method of reasoning cannot be reconciled with the sense of those scriptures, which plainly speak of the same Person, as both God and Man, and attribute the same actions to him in different respects, which is inconsistent with asserting, that the Mediator is both a divine and a human Person; and it cannot be denied but that it is a contradiction, in terms, to say, that two Persons can be so united, as to become one. However, it must be acknowledged, that this is one of the incomprehensible mysteries of our religion; and, when divines have attempted to explain some things relating to it, they have only given farther conviction, that there are some doctrines contained in scripture, which we are bound to believe, but are at a loss to determine how they are what they are asserted to be.

If it be objected, that we cannot conceive of an human nature, such an one as our Saviour's is, that has not its own personality, since there is no parallel instance hereof in any other men, which I take to be the principal thing that gave occasion to the asserting, that he had a human Person, as well as a divine.

The answer that I would give to this objection is, that though, 'tis true, every man has a distinct subsistence of his own, without being united to any other person, yet we have no ground to conclude, that the human nature of Christ, even in its first formation, had any subsistence separate from the divine nature. Had it been first formed, and then united to the divine nature, it would have had a proper subsistence of its own; but, since it was not, its personality consider'd, as united to the second Person in the Godhead, is contained therein, though its properties are infinitely distinct from it.

3. These two natures are distinct; united, but not confounded. This is asserted, in opposition to an old exploded heresy, which was maintained by some, who to avoid the error of *Nestorius*, and his followers, went into the other extrem^z, and asserted, that the divine and human nature of Christ were confounded, or blended together, after the similitude of things that are mixed together in a natural or artificial way, whereby the composition is of a different nature from the parts of which 'tis compounded, by which means they debase his Godhead, and advance his manhood; or rather, instead of supposing him to be both God and Man, they do, in effect, say, he is neither God nor Man. The main foundation, as I apprehend, of this absurd and blasphemous notion, was, that they could not conceive how he could have a divine and human understanding, and will, without asserting, with *Nestorius*, that there were two Persons in the Mediator, whereby they split against one rock, while endeavouring to avoid another. And, to fence against both extremes, the *Fathers*, in the council of *Chalcedon*, explained the doctrine in words to this purpose: That the two natures of Christ were indivisibly and inseparably united, without supposing that one was changed into the other, or confounded with it.

Therefore we must consider, that tho' these two natures are united, yet each of them retains its respective properties, as much as the soul and body of man do, though united together, which is the best similitude by which this can be illustrated, though I don't suppose that, in all respects, it answers it. Thus, in one nature, Christ had all the fulness of the Godhead, and nothing common with us; nothing finite, derived, or dependent, or any other way defective. In his other nature, he was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted: In this nature, he was born in time, and did not exist from all eternity, and increased in knowledge, and other endowments, proper thereunto. In one nature, he had a comprehensive knowledge of all things; in the other, he knew nothing but by communication, or derivation, and with those other limitations that finite wisdom is subject to. In one nature, he had an infinite sove-

^y *Nestorius* was Bishop of *Constantinople*, in the reign of *Theodosius*, the younger, A. D. 428. who very warmly maintained, that the Virgin *Mary* was not the mother of that Person that was God, but of a distinct human Person, called *Christ*, which was censured and condemned by the council at *Ephesus*, A. D. 431.

^z These are called *Eutychians*, from *Eutyches*, an Abbot of *Constantinople*, who, when he had gained a great deal of reputation, in disputing against *Nestorius*, in the council at *Ephesus*, a few years after, viz. A. D. 448. propagated his opinion, which was condemned, as heretical, in the council at *Chalcedon*, A. D. 451.

reign will; in the other, he had such a will as the creature has, which, though it was not opposite to his divine will, yet its conformity thereunto was of the same kind with that which is in perfect creatures; so that, though we do not say that his human will was the same with his divine, as to the essential properties thereof; yet it may be said to be the same, in a moral sense, as conformed thereunto, in like manner, as the will of man is said to be subjected to the will of God.

Had this been duly consider'd, persons would not have been so ready to give into an error, so dangerous and blasphemous, as that which we are opposing. And we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to distinguish between his divine and human understanding, and will, inasmuch as 'tis said, in one place, speaking of his divine understanding, *Lord, thou knowest all things*^a; and of his human, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the Son*^b; and so of his will, 'tis sometimes represented as truly divine, in the same sense as the Father's, as when 'tis said, *As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickneth them: even so the Son quickneth whom he will*^c; and elsewhere, *If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*^d; and, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*^e. And, in other places, he is represented as having a human will, essentially distinct from the will of God; as when he says, *Not my will, but thine, be done*^f.

4. The nature that was assumed by the Son of God, is farther described, as truly and properly human. It was not an angelic nature, as the Apostle says, *He took not on him the nature of angels*, inasmuch as he did not design to redeem the angels that fell, but he *took on him* the nature of *the seed of Abraham*^g. And this nature is farther described, as consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul.

(1.) Christ is described as having a true body. This is maintained against those who, in an early age of the church^h, denied that he had a real human nature. These, 'tis true, do not deny his deity; but they suppose, that it was impossible for God to be united to human flesh, and therefore that he appeared only in the likeness thereof; as some Heathen writers represent their gods, as appearing in

human forms, that they might converse with men. Thus they suppose, that the Godhead of Christ appeared in a human form, without a real human nature, in which sense they understand that scripture, *He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*ⁱ, as though, in that place, the similitude of a man were opposed to real humanity; or, at least, they suppose, that he had no other human nature when he dwelt on earth, than what he had when he appeared to the church, under the Old Testament-dispensation, viz. to *Abraham, Moses, Joshua*, and several others, in which they conclude, that there was only the likeness of a human body, or an aerial one, which, according to some common modes of speaking, is called a Spirit. To give countenance to this, they bring some other scriptures, as when 'tis said, after his resurrection, that *he appeared in another form to two disciples, as they walked into the country*^k; so when he appeared to *Mary*, it was in such a form, as that *she knew not that it was Jesus, but supposed him to be the gardener*^l; and especially when 'tis said, in another scripture^m, when his two disciples at *Emmaus* knew him, *he vanished out of their sight*ⁿ; which they understand of his vanishing, in the same sense as, according to the popular way of speaking, a *Spectrum* is said to do.

But this opinion is so absurd, as well as contrary to scripture, that it only shews how far the wild and extravagant fancies of men may run, who are so hardy, as to set aside plain scriptures, and take up with some few passages thereof, without considering their scope and design, or their harmony with other scriptures. And, indeed, there is scarce any thing said concerning him in the New Testament, but what confutes it, where we have an account of him, as being born, passing through all the ages of life, conversing familiarly with his people, eating and drinking with them, and, at last, dying on the cross, which put this matter out of all manner of dispute; as also when he distinguishes himself from a spirit, when the disciples were terrified upon his standing unexpectedly in the midst of them, supposing that he had been a Spirit, he satisfies them that they were mistaken, by saying, *Behold my hands and my feet, that it*

^a John xxi. 17.

^b Mark xiii. 32.

^c John v. 21.

^d 1 John v. 14.

^e John vi. 37.

^f Luke xxii. 42.

^g Heb. ii. 16.

^h This absurd opinion, subversive of Christianity, was propagated by several among the *Gnosticks*, in the Second Century, who, for this reason, were called *Doceta*.

ⁱ Philip. ii. 7.

^k Mark xvi. 12.

^l John xx. 14, 15.

^m Luke xxiv. 31.

ⁿ ἀφανισθὲν ἰσχυρο.

396 CHRIST *had a reasonable Soul distinct from his Deity.*

is I my self: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.^o

As for those scriptures in the Old Testament, which speak of his appearing in a human form, assumed for that purpose; whether there was, in every one of those instances, a real human body that appeared, though, in some of them, 'tis beyond dispute that there was, I will not pretend to determine; yet it must be consider'd, that this is never stiled his incarnation, or becoming man, but it was only an emblem, or prelibation thereof; and when 'tis said, in the scripture before mentioned, that he was made *in the likeness of men*, it does not from hence follow, that he was not, after his incarnation, a real man, for the likeness of man is oftentimes so understood in scripture; as when 'tis said, on occasion of the birth of *Seth*, that *Adam begat a son in his own likeness*^p. And as to that other scripture, in which Christ is said to appear in different forms, 'tis not to be supposed that there was a change in his human nature, but only a change in his countenance, or external mien; or he appeared with other kind of garments, which render'd him not immediately known by them. And when, in the other scripture, 'tis said, he *vanished out of their sight*, nothing is intended thereby, but an instantaneous withdrawing of himself from them, which, it may be, might contain something miraculous.

(2.) Christ is farther described, as having taken to himself a reasonable soul, to which his body was united. This is maintained against the *Arians*, who deny that he had an human soul, concluding that the divine nature, such an one as they will allow him to have, was, as it were, a soul to his body; which is founded partly on their misunderstanding the sense of those scriptures, in which 'tis said, *The Word was made flesh*^q, and *God was manifest in the flesh*^r; and, *Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*^s; and, *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, &c.*^t. But the principal argument, by which this opinion is supported, is, because they suppose, that, if he had had an human soul, distinct from his divine nature, he must have had two understandings, and wills, to wit, a divine and an human, and then it would have been possible for him to have had

contrary *Ideas* in his mind, and determinations in his will, as man, to what he had as God, which would infer a sort of confusion of thought, and irregularity of actions: But to this it may be answer'd,

1st. As to the former, relating to his assuming flesh, it is a very common thing, in scripture, by a *Synecdoche*, of the part for the whole, for *Flesh* to signify the whole man, consisting of soul and body, of which we have many instances in scripture; as when it is said, *All flesh had corrupted his way*^u, that is, all men had corrupted their way; and the prophet speaking concerning the vanity of man, as mortal, says, *All flesh is grass*^x.

2^{dly}. As to the other branch of their argument; we allow that Christ, as Man, had a distinct understanding and will, from what he had as God, and that his human understanding was not equally perfect with his divine, neither had his human will the sovereignty and glory of his divine will. And, if it should be also allowed, that if his human understanding and will had not always been under the influence and direction of his divine, he might have had contrary *Ideas*, and determinations, as man, to what he had as God; yet we cannot allow that the divine nature would so far suspend its direction and influence, as that his human understanding should have contradictory *Ideas* to his divine; so that this inconvenience should ensue, which would occasion a confusion and disorder in his actions, or methods of human conduct. It was no disparagement to him, nor hindrance to his work, to suppose that his human soul was subject to some natural imperfections, which were inconsistent with the infinite perfection of his deity; however, it is sufficient to assert, that, as Man, he knew every thing, which he was obliged to perform, in a way of obedience, and consented to, and delighted in every thing that was agreeable to his divine will, which would render his obedience compleat; tho' we suppose, that the nature, in which he performed it, was less perfect than that to which it was united; therefore this method of reasoning is not conclusive, and we must suppose, that he had an human soul, distinct from his divine nature. This is evident, because he could not perform obedience in the divine nature, his human soul being the only subject thereof, and it is proper to the deity to be dispassionate; therefore

^o Luke xxiv. 39.

^p Gen. v. 3.

^q John i. 14.

^r 1 Tim. iii. 16.

^s Heb. ii. 14.

^t Rom. ix. 5.

^u Gen. vi. 12.

^x Isai. xl. 6.

How Christ's human Nature was form'd like ours, and how not. 397

those sinless passions, which he was subject to, were seated in his soul, as united to the body; and that he had such passions; is very plain from scripture; for he says, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*^y. And there are various other passions besides sorrow, which he was subject to, which, though free from sin, were altogether inconsistent with the infinite perfection of the divine nature.

5. This human nature is said to have been conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin. Here we may observe,

(1.) That there was something in the formation of Christ's human nature, in which he resembled the rest of mankind, in that he was not produced, and brought into a state of manhood in an instant, or created out of the dust of the ground, as Adam was, but was born, or, as the Apostle expresses it, *made of a woman*^z, to denote his being form'd out of her substance; and accordingly he began his state of humiliation in infancy, that he might, in all respects, be made like unto those whom he came to redeem. Herein the promise made to our first parents, relating to his being *the seed of the woman*^a, was not only fulfilled; but another express prediction, by the prophet *Isaiah*, who says, *Unto us a Child is born*^b.

(2.) There was something peculiar and extraordinary in his formation, as he was an extraordinary Person, and to be engaged in a work peculiar to himself; so he is said to have been born of a Virgin, not because, as some suppose, that that is a state of greater sanctity, than any other condition of life, but, as was before observed^c, that he might be exempted from the guilt of Adam's first sin, which he would have been liable to, though sanctified from the womb, had his human nature been form'd in an ordinary way. It was certainly necessary that his human nature, which was, in its first formation, united to his divine Person, should be perfectly sinless; since it would have been a reproach cast on the Son of God, to have it said concerning him, that he was, in the nature which he assumed, estranged to, and separate from God, as all mankind are, who are born in an ordinary way. And this was also necessary for his accomplish-

ing the work of our redemption, since, as the Apostle says, *Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*^d. And, in order to his being born of a Virgin, there was an extraordinary instance of the power of God, and therefore it is said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall over-shadow thee*^e.

His being born of a Virgin, was an accomplishment of that prediction which we read of in *Isai. vii. 14. The Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bare a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel*. This text being so convincing a proof of Christianity, and, as such, refer'd to in the New Testament^f, the Jews, and many of the modern Deists, have endeavour'd to weaken the force thereof, which renders it necessary for us to illustrate and explain it, agreeably to the scope and design of the prophecy, contained in the context, which we shall endeavour to do, in the following *Paraphrase*. Says God to the prophet, "Go to Abaz, and bid him not be faint-hearted, by reason of the threaten'd invasion by the confederate kings of *Israel* and *Syria*; but let him ask a sign for the confirmation of his faith, that I may hereby assure him, that they shall not be able to do him any hurt: But I know, before-hand, his unbelief, and the fullness of his temper, that he will refuse to ask a sign; therefore, when thou goest to meet him, take thy young son *Shear-jashub* in thine hand, or in thine arms, from whom thou mayest take occasion to deliver part of the message which I send thee with to him; tell him, that though he refuse to ask a sign, nevertheless, the Lord himself shall give a sign, to his people, whom thou shalt command to hear this message, as well as *Abaz*, they being equally concerned herein; therefore let them know, that, though their obstinate and wicked king calls a compliance with my command a tempting me, and therefore will not ask a sign, I will not give him any other sign, than what the whole house of *Israel* shall behold, in future ages, which, though it cannot be properly called a *Prognostick Sign*, yet it will be, when it comes to

^y Matt. xxvi. 38.

^z Gal. iv. 4.

^a Gen. iii. 15.

^b Isai. ix. 6.

^c See Pag. 331.

^d Heb. vii. 26.

^e Luke i. 35.

^f Matt. i. 22, 23.

^g So the Hebrew word ought to be render'd, rather than *therefore*; for so it is understood in other scriptures, particularly in *Jer. xxx. 16*.

398 CHRIST, as Man, form'd of the Substance of the Virgin Mary.

“ pass, a Rememorative Signⁿ, and that
 “ shall be a glorious one; for, Behold,
 “ a Virgin¹ shall conceive, and bear a
 “ Son, and thou shalt call his name Imma-
 “ nuel. When this wonderful thing
 “ happens, a thing new and unheard of,
 “ which shall be created in the earth,
 “ that a woman should compass a man, as
 “ it is said elsewhere^k: Then the house
 “ of David shall understand the reason
 “ why I have not suffered these two kings
 “ to destroy Judah, so that it should be
 “ broken, that it be not a people, as Ephraim
 “ shall within threescore and five years,
 “ [Ver. 8.] for then the Messiah could not
 “ come of the house of David; and what
 “ he shall do for them, when he comes,
 “ is the ground and reason of all the tem-
 “ poral deliverances that I work for
 “ them, and particularly of this from the
 “ intended invasion of these two confe-
 “ derate kings. Tell them, moreover, that
 “ as this shall be a Rememorative Sign, so
 “ I will give them to understand, at pre-
 “ sent, that they shall be deliver'd in a
 “ little time; for before this Child, which
 “ thou hast here brought with thee, shall
 “ know to refuse the evil, and chuse the
 “ good, or shall know the difference be-
 “ tween moral good and evil, that is, in
 “ two or three years time, The land that
 “ thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her
 “ kings; or those two kings, which thou
 “ darest, shall be driven, by the king
 “ of Assyria, out of their own land. And
 “ inasmuch as my people may be afraid,
 “ that, before these two years are ex-
 “ pired, they shall be brought into such
 “ straits, through famine, or scarcity
 “ of provisions, which generally attend
 “ sieges, that they shall want the necessa-
 “ ries of life; let them know that this
 “ child, meaning Shear-jashub, shall not
 “ want butter and honey, that is, the best
 “ and most proper food for it, that he
 “ may know, or rather until^l he know to

“ refuse the evil, and chuse the good, that
 “ is, till these two kings, Rezin and Pe-
 “ kah, be utterly destroyed.”

Thus having consider'd our Saviour's being born of a Virgin, there is one thing more that is to be observed under this Head, namely, that he was of her substance, which is particularly mentioned in this Answer, with a design to fence against an ancient heresy, maintained by the Gnosticks in the second Century, and hath been defended by others, in later ages, who supposed, that our Saviour did not derive his human nature from the Virgin Mary, but that it was formed in heaven, and sent down from thence; and that the Virgin's womb is only to be consider'd as the first seat of its residence in this lower world, which they found on those scriptures which speak of his coming down from heaven^m, which they understand concerning his human nature; whereas, nothing is intended thereby but the manifestative presence of his divine nature, in which respect God is, in other scriptures, said to come down into this lower worldⁿ. And another scripture, which they bring to the same purpose, is that, in which, they suppose, he denies his relation to his mother, when he says, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother^o; in which he does not deny his natural relation to them, but designs to shew, that his regard to persons in the exercise of his publick ministry, was principally founded on their doing the will of his Father. And whereas they farther suppose, that if his human nature had, in any respect, been derived from the substance of the Virgin, either she must be concluded immaculate, as the Papists do, or else he must have been born a sinner. This hath been already proved to be no just consequence,

ⁿ This is a just distinction relating to signs mentioned in scripture; in which, sometimes a sign did not take place till the thing signified, or brought to remembrance thereby, had been accomplished. See Exod. iii. 12. 1 Sam. ii. 34. Isai. xxxvii. 30. Jer. xlv. 29, 30. as Bishop Kidder well observes. See Demonstrat. of the Messiah, Part II. Pag. 105. in Fol.

¹ The Hebrew word *עַלְמָה* is truly render'd a Virgin, as it is translated by the LXX. [*ἡ παρθένος*] who well understood the sense of it, in this and other places, where we meet with it; as also doth the Chaldee Paraphrast thus understand it, and the Syriac, Arabic, and vulgar Latin Versions; and this sense agrees with the grammatical construction of the word, which is derived from *עַלְמָה* *abscondit*, and it alludes to the custom used among the Jews of keeping their virgins concealed till they were married; therefore, as a learned writer well observes, *עַלְמָה* *Notat statum solitarium domi delitescientium ideoq; cœlebum & virginum*; and in those two places, in which it is generally objected by the Jews, that the word don't signify a Virgin, but a young Woman, namely, Prov. xxx. 19. and Cant. vi. 8. In the former, as one observes, *Promptissimum est intelligere vincula amoris quibus virgo incipit adstringi futuro sponso suo*; and therefore it may be understood of a Virgin, in the literal sense of the word. Vid. Cocc. Lexic. in Voc. The LXX. indeed, render it, *ἀνδρὸς ἐν νύμφῃ*, and the vulgar Latin Version, *Viri in adolescentiâ*; but the Chaldee Paraphrast renders it, *Viri in virgine*. And as for the latter scripture, in which it is said, there are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, it is plain, the word Virgins is not opposed to young Women, for such were many of them that are called Queens and Concubines, but to persons deflowered; therefore we may conclude, that the word always signifies a Virgin, and therefore is rightly translated in the text, under our present consideration.

^k Jer. xxxi. 22.

^l Gen. xi. 5, 7.

^o So the word is properly render'd by the Chaldee Paraphrast, Matt. xxi. 48, 50.

^m John iii. 13, 31.

inasmuch

inasmuch as the formation of his human nature, though it were of the substance of the Virgin, was in an extraordinary and miraculous way, whereby he was exempted from the guilt of original sin.

There is another opinion maintained by some of the school-men, which, tho' it be not generally received, seems, to me, not altogether improbable, namely, that Christ's human body, though form'd in the womb of the Virgin, and a part of her substance, yet, as to the manner of its formation, it differ'd from that of all other human bodies, inasmuch as the matter, of which they consist, receives its form in a gradual way, and they cannot, properly speaking, be stiled human bodies, till organized and fitted to have their souls united to them; whereas these suppose that the body of Christ, in its first formation, was render'd fit to receive the soul, which was, in an instant, united to it; and both soul and body, at the same time, without having any separate subsistence, were united to the divine nature. This account of the formation of Christ's human body, though I think it most adapted to the union of his soul and body with the divine nature, in the very instant of its formation, and therefore cannot but conclude it a more probable conjecture than what is generally received, yet I do not lay it down as a necessary article of faith; nor would I, from hence, be supposed to deny that the body of Christ grew in the womb like other human bodies, after the soul is united to them, nor would I set aside the account the scripture gives of the Virgin's *accomplishing* the full number of *days, in which she should be deliver'd*^p. Thus we have consider'd our Saviour, as having a true body and a reasonable soul, and both united to the divine nature, whereby he is denominated God incarnate in this *Answer*.

6. Our Mediator is farther said to have been incarnate, in the fulness of time; and it is added, he shall continue to be God and Man for ever.

(1.) Let us consider what is meant by Christ's becoming Man in the fulness of time. The human nature could not be united to the divine from all eternity; since it is inconsistent with its being a created nature, that it should exist from

eternity; notwithstanding he might, had it been so determined, have assumed this nature in the beginning of time, or immediately after the fall of man, who then stood in need of a mediator; but God, in his sovereign and wise providence, order'd it otherwise, namely, that there should be a considerable distance of time between the fall of man and Christ's incarnation, in order to his recovery, which is called, in scripture, the *fulness of time*^q; that is, the time foretold by the prophets, and particularly *Daniel*^r, whose prediction had an additional circumstance of time annexed to it, which gave occasion to the *Jews* to expect his coming at the same time that he was incarnate.

That there was an universal expectation of the *Messiah* at this time, appears from the disposition of many among them to adhere to any one, especially if he pretended himself to be a Prophet, or that he would make some change in their civil affairs; and the *Jewish* historian^s tells us of many tumults and seditions that were in that age. Some of their ring-leaders he stiles magicians; and persons pretending to be prophets, though, indeed, he does not expressly say that they assumed the character of *Messiah*, yet he observes, that the time in which this was done, gave occasion hereunto^t; by which he means, that it being at that time that the *Jews* expected that the *Messiah*, their King, should come, they thought it a fit opportunity to make these efforts, to shake off the *Roman* yoke; and they were so far from concealing the expectation they had hereof, that it was well known by the Heathen, who were not without jealousies concerning them, with respect to this matter; so that some celebrated writers among them observe, that it was generally received throughout the east, according to some ancient predictions, that, at that time, the *Jews* should obtain the empire^u, and there are several expressions, in scripture, which intimate as much: Thus *Gamaliel* speaks of one *Theudas*, who boasted himself to be some body, by which, 'tis probable, he means the *Messiah*, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, and were slain^x; which some think to be the same person that *Josephus* mentions, the name being the same; though others are rather

^p Luke ii. 6.

^q Gal. iv. 4.

^r Dan. ix. 24, 25.

^s See *Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XVIII. cap. 1. & Lib. XX.*

^t *cap. 2. & de Bell. Jud. Lib. II. cap. 6.*

^u *Βασιλείαν ὁ καὶ δὲ ἀνέπειδε.*

^x Vid. *Sueton. in Vespas.* Percrebuerat oriente toto, vetus & constans opinio, esse in fati; ut eo tempore *Judea* profecti, rerum potirentur. & *Tacit. Histor. Lib. V.* Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret *Oriens*, profectiq; *Judea* rerum potirentur.

^y Acts v. 36, 37.

400 CHRIST, *how else said to be born in the fulness of Time.*

inclined to think that it was another pretender to this character, from some critical remarks they make on the circumstance of time refer'd to by *Gamaliel*, being different from that which is mention'd by *Josephus*^v. However, this does not affect our argument; for it is plain, from hence, that, about that time, the *Jews* were disposed to join themselves to any one who endeavour'd to persuade them that he was the *Messiah*.

And this farther appears, from what our Saviour says, *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers*^z; by which, doubtless, he means several that pretended to be the *Messiah*, in that age, before he came; and it is said elsewhere^a, a little before our Saviour's crucifixion, that *they*, that is, the *Jews*, generally *thought that the kingdom of God*, and consequently the *Messiah*, whom they expected, *should immediately appear*; and he also foretels, that between this and the destruction of *Jerusalem*, that is, before that age was at an end, *many false christs should arise*, and warns his followers not to adhere to them^b.

Moreover, had not the *Jews* expected that the *Messiah* would appear at that time, they would never have sent in so formal a manner, as they are said to have done, to enquire, *Whether John the Baptist*, when he exercised his publick ministry amongst them, *was he*^c? And, when he had convinced them that he was not the *Messiah*, but that our Saviour would soon appear publickly amongst them, who had the only right to this character, he found it no difficult matter to persuade them to believe it; and accordingly *Jerusalem*, and all *Judea*, that is, the people almost universally attended on his ministry, and were baptized, making a profession of this faith, and of their expectation of, and willingness to adhere to him; and it was the report which the *wise men*, who came from the east, had received from the *Jews*, who were conversant with them, that this was the time that the *Messiah* should appear, that brought them to *Jerusalem* from their respective countries, otherwise that preternatural meteor, or star, which they saw, could not have given them a sufficient intimation concerning this matter, so as to induce them to come and pay their homage to him; and when they came, and enquired of *Herod*, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews*? how surprizing soever it might be to that proud

tyrant, to think that there was one born who, as he supposed, would stand in competition with him for the crown; yet it was no unexpected thing to the *Sanhedrim*, whose opinion in this matter he demanded, in an hypocritical manner, therefore, they say, he was *to be born in Bethlehem*, according to the prediction of the prophet *Micah*; whereas, if they had not known that this was the time in which he was to be born, they would have replied; that it was an unseasonable question, and a vain thing to ask where a person was to be born, whose birth was not expected in that age; and they might easily have satisfied *Herod*, and removed the foundation of his jealousy and trouble, and thereby have prevented that inhuman barbarity committed on the infants of *Bethlehem*, if they had told him, that the time spoken of by the prophet *Daniel*, in which the *Messiah* was to be born, was not yet come: But they knew otherwise, and, in this respect, Christ might be said to be born *in the fulness of time*. That which we shall farther observe, concerning it, is,

1st. That it was at that time when God had sufficiently tried the faith of the Old Testament-church, in waiting for his coming, and thereby glorified his sovereignty, who hath the *times and seasons* of his bestowing all blessings in his own power.

2^{dly}. It was at that time when the measure of the iniquity of the world was abundantly filled, whereby his people might observe the deplorable state into which sin had brought mankind, and the utter impossibility of our recovery without a Mediator, and that the light of nature could not discover any method by which the redemption and salvation of man might be brought about.

3^{dly}. It was at that time when the *Jewish* church was at the lowest ebb, and therefore the most seasonable time, and they were laid under the highest obligations to adore and magnify him: Their political state was broken, the scepter departed from *Judah*, and they were brought under the *Roman* yoke, which sat very uneasy upon them; neither could they ever expect to make that figure in the world as they once had done, therefore now was the time for the *Messiah* to come, and erect his kingdom. And, besides this, they were given up to a very great degree of judicial blindness and hardness, and were disposed to make void the law of God by their traditions; so that religion, among them,

^v See *Lightfoot's works*, Vol. I. Pag. 765, 766.

^c *Joh. i. 19—21.*

^z *John x. 8.*

^a *Luke xix. 11.*

^b *Matt. xxiv. 24—26.*

CHRIST *shall continue to be God and Man for ever.* 401

was at a very low ebb; therefore it was the fittest time for God to display his grace, in reviving his work, and preventing his cause and interest from wholly sinking in the world. This was the time in which the Son of God became Man.

(2.) Christ shall continue to be God and Man for ever, or the union of these two natures is indissoluble; as to his divine nature, he is necessarily eternal and unchangeable; and the human nature shall continue for ever united to it, as the result of the divine purpose, in which God intends that some ends glorious to himself, honourable to the Mediator, and advantageous to his people, should be attained thereby. For,

1st. If he had had a design to lay aside his human nature, he would have done it when he had finished his work of obedience and sufferings therein, and thereby had so far answer'd the end of his incarnation, that nothing more was necessary for the purchase of redemption: But when he rose from the dead, as a Conqueror over death and hell, and was declared to have accomplished the work he came into the world about, 'tis certain he did not lay it aside, but ascended visibly into heaven, and shall come again, in a visible manner, in that same nature, to judge the world at the last day.

2^{dly}. The eternity of Christ's human nature appears from the eternity of his mediatorial kingdom, of which more under a following *Answer*, when we come to speak concerning the glory of Christ's kingly office. It appears also, from the eternity of his intercession, which, as the Apostle expresses it, *He ever liveth to make*^d for his people: This he does, by appearing in the human nature in the presence of God, in their behalf, therefore he must for ever have a human nature.

3^{dly}. His saints shall abide for ever in heaven, and, as the Apostle says, *Shall ever be with the Lord*^e, and their happiness shall continue, both as to soul and body; and, with respect to their bodies, it is said, they shall be *fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body*^f; therefore his glorious body, or his human nature, shall continue for ever united to his divine Person.

4^{thly}. His retaining his human nature for ever, seems necessary, as it redounds to the glory of God: It is an eternal monument of his love to mankind, and an eternal means to draw forth their love to him, who procured those mansions of

glory, which they shall for ever be possess'd of, by what he did and suffer'd for them therein.

QUEST. XXXVIII. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?*

ANSW. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of Death, give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and so satisfy God's justice, procure his favour, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

QUEST. XXXIX. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be Man?*

ANSW. It was requisite that the Mediator should be Man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer, and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

QUEST. XL. *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and Man in one Person?*

ANSW. It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and Man, and this in

^d Heb. vii. 25.

^e 1 Thess. iv. 17.

^f Phil. iii. 21.

one Person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole Person.

OUR Mediator having been consider'd as God and Man, in one Person, we have a farther account of the necessity of his being so. And,

I. It was necessary that he should be a divine Person, for several reasons here assigned, with others that may be added. As,

1. If he had not been God, he could not have come into the world, or been incarnate, and have had the guilt of our sins laid on him, with his own consent; for he could not have been a party in the everlasting covenant, in which this matter was stipulated between the Father and him; and, had he not consented to be charged with the guilt of our sin, he could not have been punish'd for it, inasmuch as God cannot punish an innocent person; and if such an one be charged with this guilt, and consequently render'd the object of vindictive justice, as our Saviour is said to have been, in scripture, it must be with his own consent. Now the human nature could not consent unto its own formation, and therefore it could not consent to bear our iniquities; since to consent, supposes the person to be existent, which Christ, had he been only Man, would not have been before his incarnation, and therefore he could not have come into the world as a Surety for us, and so would not have been fit, in this respect, to have discharged the principal part of the work, which he engaged in as Mediator.

2. There is another thing, mention'd in this *Answer*, which render'd it requisite that the Mediator should be God, namely, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death. It must be allow'd, that the weight of the wrath of God, due to our sin, was so great, that no mere creature could, by his own strength, have subsisted under it. We will not deny, that a mere creature, supposing him only innocent, but not united to a divine Person, might have been born up, under the greatest burthen laid on him, by the extraordinary assistance of God, with whom all things are possible; nor that God's gi-

ving a promise that he should not fail, or be discouraged, is such a security, as would effectually keep it from sinking: yet, when we consider the human nature, as united to the divine, this is an additional security, that he should not sink under the infinite weight of the wrath of God, that lay upon him; for then it would have been said, that he, who is a divine Person, miscarried in an important work, which he undertook to perform in his human nature, which would have been a dishonour to him: So far this argument hath its proper force. But,

3. There is another reason, which more fully proves the necessity of the Mediator's being a divine Person, *viz.* that this might give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience and intercession, that so what he did might have a tendency to answer the valuable ends designed thereby, namely, the satisfying the justice of God, procuring his favour, and purchasing a peculiar people to himself. Had he been only man, what he did and suffer'd, might, indeed, have been sinless, and perfect in its kind; nevertheless, it could not be of infinite value, for a finite creature, as such, cannot pay an infinite price, and thereby answer the demands of justice. Had nothing been demanded of him but a debt of obedience, which he was obliged to perform for himself, as a Creature, it would not, indeed, have been necessary that it should be of infinite worth and value, any more than that obedience, that was due from our first parents, while in a state of innocency: But when this is consider'd as a price of redemption paid for us, and as designed to procure for us a right to the favour of God, and eternal life, this must be of such a value, that the glory of the justice of God might be secured, which nothing less than an infinite price could do; and the law of God must be not only fulfilled, but magnified, and made honourable; and therefore the obedience, which was requir'd, must not only be sinless, but have in it an infinite worth and value, that hereby, when in a way of intercession, it is pleaded before God, it might be effectual to answer the ends designed thereby; but this it could not have been, had he not been an infinite Person, namely, God as well as Man.

4. Another reason assigned for this is, that he might give his Spirit to his people. It is necessary that redemption should be applied, as well as purchased; and

The Necessity of our MEDIATOR's being GOD farther prov'd. 403

and that the same Person, as a peculiar branch of glory due to him, should perform the one as well as the other; and, in the application of redemption, it was necessary that the Spirit should be glorified, that hereby he might appear to be a divine Person; and, as he acts herein in subserviency to the Mediator's glory, as has been before observed^g, he is said to be sent by him, which he could not have been, had not Christ had a divine nature, in which respect he was equal with him; nor could he be said to give that which the Spirit works, as he promised to do, when he told his disciples, *If I depart, I will send him unto you*^h.

5. It was necessary that Christ should be God, that he might conquer all our enemies, and so remove every thing out of the way that tends to oppose his name, interest, and glory; these are sin, satan, the world, and death. Sin, which is opposite to the holiness of God, is that which spirits, excites, and gives being to all that opposition there is against him, either in earth or hell, and endeavours to eclipse his glory, controul his sovereignty, and reflect dishonour on all his perfections. This must be subdued by Christ, so that it may no longer have dominion over his peopleⁱ; and, in order hereunto, its condemning power must be taken away, by his making satisfaction for it, as our great High Priest; and also its enslaving power subdued by the efficacy of his grace, in the internal work of sanctification.

And, upon his having obtain'd this victory over sin, satan is also conquer'd when his prisoners are brought from under his power; and he finds himself for ever disappointed, and not able to detain those who were, at first, led captive by him, nor to defeat the purpose of God relating to the salvation of his elect, or to boast as though he had wrested the sceptre out of his hand, or robb'd him of one branch of his glory.

Moreover, the world, which is reckon'd among the number of God's enemies, must be conquer'd, inasmuch as it opposes his name and interest in an objective way, from whence corrupt nature takes occasion either to abuse the various gifts and dispensations of providence, or by contracting an intimacy with those who are enemies to God and religion, to become more like them, as the Apostle says, *The friendship of the world is enmity*

with God^k. Now Christ must be God, that he may discover its snares, and enable his people to improve the good things of providence to his glory, and over-rule the evil things thereof for their good.

And as for death, which is reckon'd among Christ's and his people's enemies, which the Apostle calls, *The last enemy that is to be destroy'd*^l; this is suffer'd to detain the bodies of believers, as its prisoners, till Christ's second coming; but it must be destroy'd, that so they may be made partakers of compleat redemption; and this is also a part of the Mediator's work, as he raises up his people at the last day. And all these victories over sin, satan, the world, and death, as they require infinite power, so it is necessary that he, who obtains them, should be a divine Person.

6. It is necessary that the Mediator should be God, that he might bring his people to everlasting salvation, that is, first fit them for, lead them in the way to heaven, and then receive them to it at last; for this reason, he is stiled, *The Author and Finisher of our faith*^m; and it is said, that as he began the good work, so he performs itⁿ, or carries it on to perfection. Grace is Christ's gift and work, as he purchased it by his blood, while on earth; it is necessary that he should apply it by his power: even as Zerubbabel, who was a type of him, after he had laid the foundation-stone of the temple, at last, brought forth the head stone thereof, with shoutings, crying, *Grace, grace, unto it*^o; so Christ works all our works for us, and in us, till he brings them to perfection, and presents his people unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish^p; and this is certainly a divine work, and consequently he, who performs it, must be a divine Person. And to this we may add,

7. It was necessary that our Mediator should be God, inasmuch as the everlasting happiness of his people consists in the enjoyment of him. He is not only the Author of their compleat blessedness, but, as we may express it, the matter of it; they are made happy, not only by him, but in him, accordingly heaven is described as a state, in which they behold his glory^q, and see him as he is^r; therefore, since he is the Fountain of blessedness, it is

requisite

^g See Pag. 132, 133.

^m Heb. xii. 2.

ⁱ 1 John iii. 2.

^h John xvi. 7.

ⁿ Phil. i. 6.

^k Rom. vi. 14.

^o Zech. iv. 7.

^l James iv. 4.

^p Eph. v. 27.

^q 1 Cor. xv. 26.

^r John xvii. 24.

404 *It was requisite that our* MEDIATOR *should be Man.*

requisite that he should be God, as well as Man.

II. It was requisite that the Mediator should be Man. When we speak of the necessity of Christ's incarnation, we are not to understand hereby, that this was absolutely necessary, without supposing the divine will, or purpose, to redeem man; for since our redemption was not in it self necessary, but was only so, as the result of God's purpose relating thereunto; so Christ's incarnation was necessary, as a means to accomplish it. This is what divines generally call a conditional necessity¹; so that since Christ was ordain'd to be a Mediator between God and man, it was requisite that he should become Man: The reason assign'd for it is, that he might perform obedience to the law. That obedience to the law was required, in order to his making satisfaction for sin, we shall have occasion to consider, when we speak of his priestly office; therefore all that need be observed under this *Head* is, that this obedience could not be perform'd by him in the divine nature, in which respect he cannot be under any obligation to perform that which belongs only to those who are creatures, and as such subjects; therefore, if he be made under the law, he must have a nature fitted and disposed to yield obedience.

Some have enquired, whether it was possible for Christ to have answer'd this end, by taking any other nature into union with his divine Person; or, whether this might have been brought about by his taking on him the nature of angels? I shall not enter so far into this subject, as to determine whether God might, had he pleased, have accepted of obedience in any other nature, fitted for that purpose; but we have ground, from scripture, to conclude, that this was the only way that God had ordain'd for the redemption of man; and therefore, tho' Christ might have perform'd obedience in some other finite nature, or might have taken the nature of angels, this would not, in all respects, have answer'd those many great ends, which were designed by his incarnation. And therefore, since this was the way in which God ordain'd that man should be redeem'd, it was necessary that he should take the human nature into union with his divine; and inasmuch as he was to yield obedience to the same law, that we had violated, it was necessary that he

should be *made of a woman*, as the Apostle expresses it². God had ordain'd, as an expedient most conducive for his own glory, that he, who was to be our Redeemer, should run the same race with us; and also, that he should suffer what was due to us, as the consequence of our rebellion against him, that so, as *the Captain of our salvation, he should be made perfect through sufferings*³. And inasmuch as sufferings were due to us in our bodies, it was necessary, God having so ordain'd it, that he should suffer in his body, as well as in his soul; and, as death enter'd into the world by sin, so God ordain'd that we should be redeem'd from the power of the grave, by one, who died for us; in which respects, it was necessary that he should be man.

There are also other ends mentioned in this *Answer*, which render this necessary, namely, that he might advance our nature. It was a very great honour which that particular nature, which he assumed, was advanced unto, in its being taken into union with his divine Person. Though it had no intrinsic dignity, or glory, above what other intelligent, finite, senseless beings are capable of; yet it had a greater relative glory than any other creature had, or can have, which may be illustrated by a similitude taken from the body of man, how mean soever it is in it self; yet, when consider'd in its relation to the soul, that adds a degree of excellency to it, in a relative sense, greater than what belongs to any creature, destitute of understanding; so the human nature of Christ, though it had not in it self a glory greater than what another finite creature might have been advanced to; yet, when consider'd as united to the divine nature, its glory, in a relative sense, may be said to be infinite.

It follows, from hence, that since Christ's being truly and properly man, was a particular instance in him of the advancement of our nature, to a greater degree of honour, than what has been confer'd on any other creature, this lays the highest obligation on us to admire and adore him; and should be an inducement to us, not to debase that nature which God has, in this respect, thus delighted to honour, by the commission of those sins, which are the greatest reproach unto it.

Another consequence of Christ's incarnation, whereby it farther appears that it was requisite that he should be man, is,

¹ It is otherwise styled, *Necessitas consequentia*.

² Gal. iv. 4.

³ Heb. ii. 10.

CHRIST, as Man, intercedes for, and sympathizes with us. 405

that, in our nature, he might make intercession for us. For the understanding of which, let it be consider'd, that the divine nature cannot, properly speaking, be said to make intercession, since this includes in it an act of worship, and argues the Person, who intercedes, to be dependent, and indigent, which is inconsistent with the self-sufficiency and independency of the Godhead; therefore, had he been only God, he could not have made intercession for us, and consequently this is the necessary result of his incarnation.

Object. 1. It may be objected hereunto, that *the Spirit* is said to *make intercession for the saints, according to the will of God*^x, whereas he has no human nature to make intercession in; therefore Christ might have made intercession for us, tho' he had not been incarnate.

Ans. When the Spirit is said to make intercession for us, this is not to be understood of his appearing in the presence of God, and so offering prayers, or supplications to him in our behalf; but it only intends his enabling us to pray for our selves, which is an effect of his power, working this grace in us; therefore the Apostle, speaking concerning the same thing, says elsewhere, *God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father*^y, that is, enabling us to cry, *Abba, Father*: Such an intercession as this is not unbecoming a divine Person; and this is what is plainly the sense of those scriptures, in which the Spirit is said to intercede for us. As for Christ's intercession, it consists, indeed, in his praying for us, rather than in enabling us to pray, therefore it was requisite that he should be Man, in order thereunto.

Object. 2. It is generally supposed, that Christ made intercession for his people before his incarnation: Thus we cannot but conclude, that he is intended by *the angel of the Lord*, who is represented as pleading for *Israel*; *O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and upon the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years*^z? and also as pleading in their behalf against the accusations of satan, *The Lord rebuke thee, O satan; even the Lord which hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: Is not this a brand which is pluck'd out of the fire*^a? If therefore he made intercession at that time, when he had no human nature, his incarnation was not necessary thereunto.

Ans. Though we allow that Christ is often represented, in the Old Testament, as interceding for his people; yet these expressions are either proleptical, and do not denote so much what Christ then did, as what he would do, after he had assumed our nature; or it implies, that the salvation of the church, under that dispensation, was owing to the intercession that Christ would make after his incarnation, as well as to that satisfaction which he would give to the justice of God in our nature; so that Christ, in those scriptures, is represented as procuring those blessings for his people, by what he would, in reality, do after his incarnation, the virtue whereof is supposed to be extended to them at that time: He did not therefore *formally*, but *virtually*, intercede for them; and consequently it does not prove that his incarnation was not necessary for his making that intercession, which he ever lives to do in the behalf of his church.

It is farther observed, that it was requisite that our Mediator should be Man, that he might have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities: Thus the Apostle says, *He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been, in all points, in his human nature, tempted like as we are, yet without sin*^b. As God, 'tis true, he has a perfect, namely, a divine knowledge of our infirmities, but not an experimental knowledge thereof; and therefore, in this respect, had he not been Man, he could not have been said to sympathize with us herein; and therefore his compassion towards us, has this additional motive taken from his incarnation: It was in this respect that he had the passions of the human nature, and thereby is induced, from what he once experienced, to help our infirmities, as being such as he himself condescended to bear.

And to this it may be added, as a farther consequence of his incarnation, that we are made partakers of the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access, with boldness, to the throne of grace. This the Apostle also gives us occasion to infer, from his being made of a woman, and made under the law, not only that *he might redeem them that were under the law, but that we might receive the adoption of sons*^c; and encourages us, from hence, to *come boldly to the throne of grace*^d. As Christ's sonship, as Mediator, includes his incar-

^x Rom. viii. 27. ^y Gal. iv. 6. ^z Zech. i. 12.

^a Heb. iv. 16.

^b Chap. iii. 2.

^c Heb. iv. 15.

^d Gal. iv. 5.

406 *Why our* MEDIATOR *must be God and Man in one Person.*

nation, and was the ground and reason of the throne of grace being erected, to which we are invited to come; so, he being, in the same respect, constituted Heir of all things, believers, who are the sons of God in a lower sense, are, notwithstanding, stiled, *Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*^c: He is the Head and Lord of this great family, who purchased an inheritance for them, and they the members thereof, who, in the virtue of his purchase, have a right to it; therefore his incarnation, which was necessary hereunto, was the great foundation of our obtaining the privileges of God's adopted children, and of our access by him to the Father. We first come by faith to him, who, if we may allude to *Elibu's* words, *was form'd out of the clay, and therefore his terror shall not make us afraid, neither shall his hand be heavy upon us*^f, and, through him, we come to God, as to our reconciled Father.

III. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God and man, in one Person. Had his human nature been a distinct human person, the work of our redemption would have been brought about by two persons, which would each of them have had the character of Mediator, unless two persons could be so united, as to constitute but one, which is no better than a contradiction. And it is farther observed, in the *Answer* under our present consideration, that there were works to be perform'd proper to each nature: In the human nature, he was to perform every thing that implied subjection, obedience, or suffering; and, though none of these could be perform'd by him, in his divine nature, yet an infinite worth, value, and dignity, was to be added thereunto, which was not so much the result of any thing done by him in that nature, as of the union of the human nature with it; upon which account, the obedience he perform'd, had, in a relative sense, the same value, as though it had been perform'd in his divine nature; and, upon this account, it is said, that *God purchased the church with his own blood*^g.

And to this we may add, that as each nature was distinct, and their properties not in the least confounded, as was before observed; so we often read, in scripture, of distinct properties attributed to the same person, which are oppos'd to each other, namely, mortality and im-

mortality, weakness and omnipotency, dependence and independence, &c. which could not be, with any propriety of speaking, applied to him, had he not been God and man, in the same person. This is generally stiled, by divines, *a communication of properties*^h, concerning which we must observe, that the properties of one nature are not predicated of the other; as the *Lutherans* suppose, when they conclude, that the human nature of Christ is omnipresent, upon which their doctrine of *Consubstantiation* is founded: But we assert, that the properties of one nature are predicated of the same person, to whom the other nature also belongs; so that when we say, the Person, that was God, obey'd and suffer'd; or the Person, that was man, paid an infinite price to the justice of God, we are far from asserting, that the Godhead of Christ obey'd, or the manhood meritedⁱ; and this is the necessary result of his two natures being united in one Person. There are two things observed in illustrating this matter.

1. That the works of each nature must be accepted of God for us, as the works of the whole Person, or of the same Person; therefore, if the nature that obey'd and suffer'd had been an human person, his obedience and sufferings could not have been of infinite value, or accepted by God, as a sufficient price of redemption; for they could not have had this value reflected on them, had they not been the works of a divine Person; and those rays of divine glory, that shined forth in his human nature, could have no immediate relation to it, had it been a distinct Person from that of his Godhead.

2. It is farther observed, that those works, which were perform'd by him in each nature, are to be relied on by us, as the works of the whole Person: This reliance contains in it an instance of adoration, and supposes the Person, who performs them, to be God, which he was not in his human nature; therefore we are to adore our Mediator, and rely on the works perform'd by him, in his human nature, as he is God and man, in one Person. As we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to conclude, that the Mediator is the Object of divine adoration; so we are to depend on him, as a divine Person, for salvation; and our worship herein does not terminate on his human nature, but on his deity: But, if his human nature had been a distinct hu-

^c Rom. viii. 17.

^f Job xxxiii. 6.

^g Acts xx. 28.

^h See Pag. 123. Col. 1.

ⁱ This is generally stiled, by divines, *Communicatio idiomatum in concreto, non in abstracto.*

man person, we could not be said to adore him that died for us, and rose again; so that, upon all these accounts, it is necessary that he should be not only God and man, but that these two natures should be united in one Person.

Having consider'd our Mediator as God and man, in one Person, we are now to speak of him as having those glorious titles and characters attributed to him, expressive of his mediatorial work and dignity; accordingly, he is variously denominated as such in scripture: Sometimes he is called, *Lord*^k; at other times, *Jesus*^l; and elsewhere, *The Lord Jesus*^m; and also, *The Lord Christ*ⁿ; and, in other places, *The Lord Jesus Christ*^o. He is called *Lord*, to denote the infinite dignity of his Person, as God equal with the Father, which name is given him in the New Testament, in the same sense, in which he is called *Jehovah* in the Old, as has been observed under a foregoing *Answer*^p; and to denote his divine sovereignty, as the Governor of the world, and the church, and particularly as executing his kingly office as Mediator; and, in the two following *Answers*, he is farther described by his mediatorial characters, *Jesus* and *Christ*.

QUEST. XLI. *Why was our Mediator called Jesus?*

ANSW. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.

QUEST. XLII. *Why was our Mediator called Christ?*

ANSW. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure, and so set a-part, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

I. OUR Mediator is very often called *Jesus* in the New Testament, which name signifies a *Saviour*, as it is par-

ticularly intimated by the angel, who gave direction, that he should be so called, before his birth^q; and he is not only stiled our Saviour, but *our Salvation*, in the abstract: Thus the prophet, foretelling his incarnation, says, *Behold, thy Salvation cometh; his reward is with him, and his work before him*^r; and, when Simeon held him in his arms, he blessed God, and said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*^s. He is a Saviour, as he brings about salvation for us, and we attain it by him; and he may be stiled, our Salvation, as our eternal blessedness consists in the enjoyment of him. Salvation contains in it a preserving and delivering us from all evil, which some call the negative *Idea* thereof, and a conferring on us the greatest good, which is the positive *Idea* of it. In saving us from evil, he is sometimes said to *deliver us from this present evil world*^t; and elsewhere we are said to *be saved from wrath through him*^u; and, as all the deliverance we experience, or hope for, is included in the word *Salvation*, so are all the spiritual blessings wherewith we are blessed, in this, or a better world; and, upon this account, he, who is the Purchaser and Author thereof, is called *Jesus*.

1. Since Christ is called Jesus, let us be exhorted to take heed that we do not entertain any unworthy thoughts of him, or that salvation which he hath procured, by supposing it indefinite, or indeterminate, or that he did not come into the world to save a certain number, who shall eventually obtain this blessing; but that he is the Redeemer, and consequently the Saviour of many that shall finally perish, which is little better than a contradiction. And let us not suppose, that it is in the power of man to make his salvation of none effect; for whatever difficulties there may be in the way, he will certainly overcome them, otherwise he would be called Jesus, or a Saviour, to no purpose; and therefore they, who suppose him to be the Saviour of all mankind upon this uncertain condition, that they improve their natural powers, or the liberty of their will, so as to render his purpose, relating to their salvation, effectual, which otherwise it would not be, do not give him that glory which belongs to him, as called Jesus.

2. Let us take heed that we do not extenuate his salvation to our own discou-

^k Phil. iv. 5.
Pag. 135—143.

^l Matt. i. 21.
^q Matt. i. 21.

^m Acts ix. 17.
^r Isai. lxii. 11.

ⁿ Coloss. iii. 24.
^s Luke ii. 28—30.

^o Chap. i. 2.
^t Gal. i. 4.

^p See
Rom. v. 9.
ragement,

agement, as though he were not able to save, to the uttermost, all that come unto God, by him, or did not come into the world to save the chief of sinners; or we had certain ground to conclude our case to be so deplorable, as that we are out of the reach of his salvation.

3. Let none presume, without ground, that he is their Saviour, or that they have an interest in him as such, while in an unconverted state; or vainly conclude, that they shall be saved by him, without faith in, or subjection to him.

4. Let this name Jesus tend to excite in us the greatest thankfulness, especially if we have experienced the beginning of the work of salvation; and let such encourage themselves to hope, that having begun the good work in them, he will finish it, when he shall appear, a second time, without sin unto salvation.

II. Our Mediator is called *Christ*, or, as it is generally express'd in the Old Testament, the *Messiah*, which signifies a Person anointed: Thus it is said, *We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ*^x; or, as it is in the margin, *the Anointed*. And, as anointing was made use of under the ceremonial law, in the public inauguration and investiture of prophets, priests, and kings, in their respective offices, they are, for that reason, called *God's anointed*: Thus it is said, concerning the prophets, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm*^y. Kings are likewise so stil'd, as *Samuel* says, *Surely the Lord's anointed is before him*^z. These were often anointed, tho' not always^a; but the priests were always anointed, when they first entered on their office; and the High Priest is described by this character, as he upon *whose head the anointing oil was poured*; so we read of *the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments*^b. This was not an insignificant ceremony, or merely politi-

cal, in which respect it is used, in our day, in the inauguration of kings; but it was an ordinance to signify God's designation of them, to the office which they were to execute, in which they were to expect and depend upon him for those qualifications that were necessary thereunto; but it was more especially design'd to typify the solemn inauguration and investiture of our Saviour, in the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of his church; and, in allusion hereunto, he is called, *the Messiah*, or *the Christ*. His anointing was not external, or visible, with material oil; but, in a spiritual sense, it signified his receiving a commission from the Father to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; upon which account, he is stiled, *God's holy Child Jesus, whom he had anointed*^c. And this unction, as it was of a spiritual nature, so it was attended with greater circumstances of glory; and the offices he was appointed to execute, were more spiritual, extensive, and advantageous, than their's, who were types thereof: Thus the Psalmist says of him, *God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows*^d; accordingly he was anointed to execute his prophetic office, *to preach the gospel to the poor*^e; and his priestly, so the prophet *Daniel* speaks of him, as *finishing transgression, making an end of sin, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness*^f, which he did as a Priest; and then he speaks of anointing him, who was *most holy*, as infinitely excelling all those who were anointed with holy oil: He is also said to be anointed to execute his kingly office; and, with respect thereunto, is called the Lord's anointed; and God says, concerning him, *I have set*, or, as it is in the margin, *anointed, my king upon my holy hill of Zion*^g. Now there are three things which are more especially intended in this unction, which are particularly mentioned in this *Answer*.

1. His being set apart, or separated from the rest of mankind, as the only

^x John i. 41.

^y Psal. cv. 15.

^z 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

^a Prophets were, indeed, oftentimes set apart for that office, without anointing; but it seems probable, from the command of God to *Elijah*, to anoint *Elisha* to be a prophet in his room, that when they were called, in an extraordinary manner, to be publick prophets, and, in that respect, as it is said concerning the prophet *Jeremiah*, [Chap. i. 10.] *Set over nations and kingdoms*, then they were not only sanctified and ordained hereunto, but the ceremony of anointing was used, especially when some other Prophet was appointed to install them in this office. And as for kings, though they were not always anointed, yet this ceremony was generally used, as is observed by some *Jewish* writers, when the kingdom was rent out of the hand of one, and another was, by immediate divine direction, substituted to reign in his stead: Thus, when the kingdom was taken from *Saul*, *David* was anointed; and it was also used in other instances, though the crown was inherited by lineal descent, when any other made pretensions to it. Thus *David* commanded *Solomon* to be anointed, because *Adonijah* pretended to it, [1 Kings i. 34.] And *Joash* was anointed, though he had a right to the crown, as descending from *Ahaziah*, who was king before him, because the crown had, for some time, been usurped by *Ataliah*, [2 Kings xi. 12.] In these, and such-like cases, kings were installed in their office by unction, though, in other instances, it was not universally practised.

^b Psal. cxxxiii. 2. compared with *Ver.* 6.

^c Acts iv. 27.

^d Psal. xlv. 7.

^e Luke iv. 18.

^f Dan. ix. 24.

^g Psal. ii. 2.

Person who was designed to execute these offices, together with his publick investiture therein. For the right understanding of which, let it be consider'd, that there was an eternal designation of him by the Father thereunto: Thus the Apostle speaks of him, as one *who was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*^h. And some think, that this is intended by that expression of the Psalmist, *I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*ⁱ; and that this is also intended by *his being set up from everlasting*^k. This we may call his eternal inauguration, which was the foundation, ground, and reason of his incarnation, or of that inauguration, or investiture, which was visible to men in time, which is the *second* thing to be consider'd, in his being set apart to execute these offices.

When he came into the world, there was a glorious declaration given, both to angels and men, that he was the Person whom God had confer'd this honour upon, and accordingly he received glory from them, as Mediator, by a divine warrant; so some understand that scripture, *When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him*^l; and elsewhere we read^m of the angels being sent, as heralds, to make proclamation of this matter to men, at his first coming into the world. And, when he enter'd on his publick ministry, there was a divine declaration given, as a farther visible confirmation hereof, immediately after his baptism, when *the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*ⁿ; and John the Baptist was immediately raised up, as a prophet, to signify this to the world, which he did at that time, when our Saviour first enter'd on his publick ministry, and speaks of him, as *prefer'd before himself*, not only as having a more excellent nature, but as being set apart to an higher office, than that which he was called to; and accordingly he stiles him, *The Lamb of God*, intimating, that God had set him apart, as the great Sacrifice that was to be offer'd for sin^o; and, soon after this, he gives another testimony hereunto, together with a glorious, yet just, character of the Person, who was invested with this authori-

ty, when he says, concerning him, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven*, q. d. "I have not received this honour of being the Christ, and doing the works which he does, but it is given him from heaven: I am not the bridegroom of the church, but *his friend*, who rejoice greatly, because of his voice; what he hath seen and heard, that he testified; and God hath sent him, whose word he speaketh; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him; the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand^p"; therefore he is set apart, by him, to perform the work of a Mediator, which belongeth not unto me."

2. Christ was furnish'd with authority, or had a commission given him, to perform the work he was engaged in, as Mediator. This was absolutely necessary, since, as the Apostle says, concerning the priesthood in general, that *no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God*, and authorized by him to perform it, as was Aaron; so also Christ glorified not himself, but he that said unto him, *Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee*; and, *thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*^q. As it was reckon'd an intrusion, and no other than an instance of prophaneness, for any one to exercise a sacred office, without a divine warrant, it was necessary that our Saviour should be furnish'd therewith: The work he was to perform was glorious, the consequences thereof of the highest importance, and his services would not have been accepted, or avail'd to answer the great ends thereof, had he not received a commission from the Father; and that he came into the world with this commission and authority, derived from him, he constantly asserts and proves; he asserts it, when speaking concerning himself, that *God the Father had sealed him*^r; and elsewhere says, *I have power to lay down my life, and to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father*^s; and he not only asserts, but proves it; every miracle that he wrought being a confirmation thereof, in which respect a divine testimony was affix'd to this commission: Thus he says, *The works that I do, in my Father's name, they bear witness of me*^t; and elsewhere, when he asserts his authority, and proves, that *the words which he spake, he spake not of*

^h 1 Pet. i. 20.

ⁱ Psal. ii. 7.

^k Prov. viii. 23.

^l Heb. i. 6.

^m Luke ii. 10, 11.

ⁿ Matt. iii. 16, 17.

^o John i. 29, 30.

^p John iii. 27—35.

^q Heb. v. 4—6.

^r John vi. 27.

John x. 18.

^s Ver. 25.

410 CHRIST, *how furnished with Ability to execute his Offices.*

himself; he adds, *the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works*^u. He appeals to those miraculous works, which were perform'd, either by himself, or by the Father, which he might well do, because the Father and he had the same divine power, and thereby intimates, that the commission, which he received from the Father, was attested in this extraordinary manner.

3. Our Saviour's unction included in it an ability to execute those offices, which he was engaged in, as Mediator. We have before observ'd, that when persons, under the ceremonial law, were anointed to execute the offices either of prophet, priest, or king, this was not only an ordinance, to signify that they had a divine warrant to execute them; but they were hereby given to expect those qualifications that were necessary to the discharge thereof. God never calls to an office, but he qualifies for it: Thus our Saviour was furnish'd with ability, as well as authority; this was more especially applicable to his human nature, in which he was to obey and suffer; as to his divine nature, that could not be the subject of a derived power, or qualification confer'd upon it. Now this ability, with which our Saviour was furnish'd as man, was that which render'd him fit to perform the work which he came into the world about. As a Prophet, he was qualified to preach the gospel with greater wisdom and authority than all others, who were ever engaged in this work: His very enemies confessed, that *never man spake like him*^x; and he had continual assistance from God, which preserved him from all mistakes; so that what he deliver'd was infallibly true, and, as such, to be depended on: He was also furnish'd with zeal for the glory of God, yet such as was temper'd with sympathy, meekness, and compassion, towards his people, and an holy courage, resolution, and fortitude, which preserved him from fainting, or being discouraged under all his sufferings, and a constant disposition and inclination to refer all to the glory of the Father, and not to assume any branch of divine honour to his human nature; and, by this means, the whole discharge of his ministry was acceptable, both to God and man.

Thus concerning the reasons why our Saviour is called Christ. And this leads us to consider the offices which he was

anointed to execute, upon the account whereof he is stiled, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. And here we shall premise some things in general concerning these three offices; and then speak to each of them, as contained in the following *Answers*.

1. Concerning the number of the offices, which he executes, they are *three*. Some have enquired, whether there are not more than three executed by him, inasmuch as there are several characters and relations, which Christ is described by, and is said to stand in, to his people, besides those of Prophet, Priest, and King: Thus he is stiled, *The Head of the body, the church*^y, and *an Husband to it*^z, and *a Bridegroom*^a; and elsewhere he is said to perform the office of a *Shepherd*: Thus he stiles himself, *The good Shepherd*^b; and he is call'd, *The Captain of our salvation*^c, and many other characters of the like nature are given him, from whence some have taken occasion to think, that several of them contain *Ideas*, distinct from those of a Prophet, Priest, and King, and therefore that there are more offices than these executed by him: But all that need be said to this is, that these, and other characters and relations, which are ascribed to Christ in scripture, are all included in, or reducible to one or other of these three offices; therefore we have no reason to conclude, that he executes any other offices, distinct from them, as Mediator.

2. The condition of fallen man, and the way in which God designed to bring him to salvation, which was adapted thereunto, renders it necessary that Christ should execute these three offices. Accordingly, we are all of us, by nature, ignorant of, and prejudiced against divine truth, as the Apostle observes, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*^d; therefore it is necessary that Christ should execute the office of a Prophet, to lead us into all truth, and give us this spiritual discerning thereof.

Moreover, we are all *guilty before God*^e, and can by no means make atonement, give satisfaction to his justice, or procure a pardon; nor can we plead any thing done by us, as a ground thereof, therefore we need that Christ should execute the office of a Priest, and so first make atonement, and then intercession, for us.

^u John xiv. 10, 11.

^x John vii. 46.

^y Coloss. i. 18.

^z Isai. liv. 5.

^a John iii. 29.

^b John x. 14.

^c Heb. ii. 10.

^d 1 Cor. ii. 14.

^e Rom. iii. 19.

CHRIST'S Offices, how distinguished, but not divided. 411

And we are all, by nature, obstinate and rebellious; exposed to many dangers and enemies, who are too strong for us; therefore it is necessary that Christ should execute the office of a King, to subdue our corruptions, and restrain and conquer our enemies.

And as to the way in which God brings his people to salvation, this requires Christ's executing his threefold office. Salvation must be purchased, proclaimed, and applied; the first of these respects Christ's priestly office; the second, his prophetic; and the third, his kingly; accordingly he is said to be *made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*^f; and elsewhere he styles himself, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*^g.

Moreover, in the execution of these offices, and bringing us thereby to salvation, he deals with God and man in different respects; with God, more especially, as a Priest, in satisfying his justice, and procuring his favour: Thus the High Priest under the law, who was a type of Christ's priestly office, is said to be *ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*^h; even so Christ, our great High Priest, by offering himself a sacrifice, perform'd that part of his ministry which pertained to God, in the behalf of men; and he also deals with God, by appearing in his presence, continually making intercession for them; and, on the other hand, he deals with men, as designing to bring them to God, which he does more especially as a Prophet and a King.

3. These three offices, which Christ executes, are distinct, and therefore not to be confounded. This we maintain against Socinus and his followers: They speak, indeed, of Christ, as a Prophet, Priest, and King, which they are obliged to do, because the words are so frequently mentioned in scripture; yet the sense they give of them, amounts to little more than an acknowledgment of his prophetic office: And even this, as they explain it, contains in it nothing more than what other prophets, that went before him, either were, or might have been, qualified to perform; for any one, who is under divine inspiration, may infallibly declare the will of God, and give forth those laws, by which God has ordained that his church should be govern'd; and our Saviour, according to them, does little more than this. They speak of him, indeed, as a Priest, but not as making sa-

tisfaction for our sins to the justice of God, nor by interceding in the virtue thereof, but only by putting up prayers and supplications to him on our behalf; which differs very little from those prayers and supplications that were put up by other prophets in behalf of the people.

Again, they speak of him as a King, but not as subduing our wills, or conquering our enemies by almighty power; or, if they allow that he subdues us to himself, as a King, yet, in their farther explaining thereof, they mean nothing else by it, but his gaining us over to his side by arguments, freeing us from our ignorance, and over-coming our prejudices against truth, by a clear revelation of it; or, if they speak of his conquering our enemies, they intend nothing else by it, but his guarding and defending his people, by furnishing them with arguments to resist their subtle attempts against them, all which things are reducible to his prophetic office; so that, though they speak of him as executing three offices, it is no more than if they should assert, that he executes but one; and the most they intend by all this is, that he is a Teacher, sent from God, and consequently not much superior in excellency to Moses, who was a prophet, raised up from among his brethren, and had this honourable character given him, that he was *faithful in all his house*; whereas the Apostle proves, by what he says of our Lord Jesus, that he was *counted worthy of more glory, as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house*; and farther styles him a divine Person, when he says, *he that built all things is God*ⁱ.

4. These three offices, which Christ executes, are not to be divided, especially when they are executed in such a way, as is effectual to the salvation of those who are concerned herein. He may, indeed, in an objective way, reveal the will of God, or give laws to his church, as a Prophet, without working savingly upon the understanding: He may also execute his kingly office, as a Judge, in pouring forth the vials of his wrath on his enemies, without subduing the stubbornness of their wills, or bringing them to the obedience of faith: Nevertheless, we must conclude, that, wheresoever he executes one of these offices in a saving way, he executes them all. In this respect, though the offices be distinguished, yet, in the execution of them, they are not divided: Thus whosoever is so taught by

him,

^f 1 Cor. i. 30.

^g John xiv. 6.

^h Heb. v. 1.

ⁱ Heb. iii. 2, 3.

him, as a Prophet, as to be made wise to salvation, is redeemed by his blood, as a Priest, overcome by his power, as a King, and brought into subjection to his will in all things; so all for whom, as a Priest, he has purchased peace, to them he will, in his own time, proclaim it, as a Prophet, and enable them to believe in him, by making them willing in the day of his power.

5. He executes these offices in a twofold state; first, of humiliation, and then, of exaltation, with different circumstances agreeable thereunto, which twofold state will be consider'd in some following *Answers*. What we shall observe, at present, concerning it, is, that that part of Christ's priestly office, in which he made atonement for sin, was executed on earth in his state of humiliation; whereas the other part thereof, consisting in his intercession, together with some branches of his prophetic and kingly office, were executed both in earth and heaven, tho' in a different manner, agreeable to those circumstances of glory in which he was and is.

QUEST. XLIII. *How doth Christ execute the office of a Prophet?*

ANSW. Christ executeth the office of a Prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and Word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

THAT which may be first observ'd, before we consider the parts of Christ's prophetic office, and the manner of his executing it, is the order in which it is mentioned, as set before his priestly and kingly offices, which may give us occasion to enquire whether it be executed before them.

1. If we consider the natural order of his executing his three offices, or the dependence of the execution of them, one on the other, then it must be observed, that he first executes his priestly office, and, pursuant thereunto, his prophetic and kingly; for sinners must first be redeem'd by his blood, before they can be brought to a saving knowledge of him, or an entire subjection to him; therefore he first deals with God as a Priest, in our

behalf, and thereby prepares the way of salvation, and lays the foundation thereof in his oblation and intercession, and then, as a Prophet and King, he deals with men, and thereby brings them to God. In this respect therefore, if these three offices were to be laid down in their natural order, we must say, that Christ executes the office of a Priest, Prophet, and King.

2. If we consider the order in which our Saviour executed these offices, in the exercise of his publick ministry, we may say, he first produced his commission, or proclaimed the end of his coming into the world, and proved himself to be the Messiah, and so discover'd himself to his people, as the great Prophet of his church; and, after that, he laid down his life, as a sacrifice for sin, as a Priest, and then he conquer'd his enemies, spoiled principalities and powers, and exerted the exceeding greatness of his power, in the application of redemption, as a King. It is in this respect that the offices of Christ are generally treated of, in the same method in which they are here laid down; so that his prophetic office is first mentioned, which is what we are now to consider. And,

I. We shall shew how Christ is described, in scripture, as the Prophet of his church. There are many expressions whereby his prophetic office is set forth: Thus he is stiled, *a Teacher come from God*^k; and he calls himself our *Master*^l, or the Lord of our faith, and, as such, is distinguished from all other teachers, some of which affected very much to be called *Rabbi*, and would persuade the world, by an implicit faith, to believe whatever they said: But our Saviour advises his disciples to refuse that title; for, says he, *One is your Master, even Christ*.

Again, he is called, *a Law-giver*^m, or the one and only Law-giver; and, it is added, that he differs from all other law-givers, in that he is *able to save and to destroy*ⁿ. He is also called, *The Angel*, or *Messenger of the covenant*, who reveals the covenant of grace to us; and brings these glad tidings, that God is, in him, reconciling the world to himself.

He is also called, *The Apostle*, as well as the High Priest, *of our profession*^o, as he was first sent of God to publish peace, before he appointed others, who are called Apostles, or inferior ministers to him, to pursue the same design. He is

^k John iii. 2.

^l Matt. xxiii. 8.

^m Isai. xxxiii. 22.

ⁿ James iv. 12.

^o Heb. iii. 1.

CHRIST, qualified for it, reveals the Will of GOD to us. 413

also stiled, *A Witness to the people*, their *Leader and Commander*^p; and he is farther described, as a *faithful Witness*^q.

And he is set forth by several metaphorical expressions, which denote the execution of this office, viz. *The Light which shineth in darkness*^r: Thus the prophet *Isaiak* describes him, when he says, *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*^t. He is likewise compared to the sun, the Fountain of light, and so called, *The Sun of righteousness*, that was to *arise with healing in his wings*^u; and, *The bright Morning Star*^v; by which, and many other expressions to the same purpose, this prophetic office of Christ is set forth in scripture.

II. We shall now consider what Christ does in the execution of his prophetic office, as he is said to reveal the will of God to his church. And,

1. How he was qualified for this work, which supposes him to have a perfect knowledge of the divine will. We have before observed, that the *Socinians*, agreeably to the low thoughts they have of him, as a mere Creature, suppose, that he was unacquainted with the will of God till he enter'd on his publick ministry; and, in order to his being instructed therein, that he was, soon after his baptism, taken into heaven, and there learn'd, from the Father, what he was to impart to mankind, which they suppose to be the meaning of those scriptures, that speak of him, as *coming down from heaven*, or *coming forth from the Father*, into the world^x; and his *speaking as the Father had taught him*, or *what he had seen with his Father*^y. But, since we have shewn the absurdity of this opinion elsewhere, when speaking in defence of our Saviour's deity^z, and have consider'd that those scriptures, which mention his coming down from heaven, plainly refer to his incarnation, and that the mode of expression is the same, as when God is said, in other scriptures, to come down into this lower world, by his manifestative presence there, which is not inconsistent with his omnipresence; and we have also consider'd the groundlessness and absurdity of this conjecture; and therefore I shall only add, at present, that those scriptures, which speak of Christ's being taught the things which he was to impart to the church, as they do not overthrow

the omniscience of his divine nature; so they give no countenance to this supposition, that his human nature was taken up into heaven to be taught the will of God. In this nature, indeed, he needed instruction, and had no knowledge but what he received by communication; and it is plainly said of him, that he *increased in wisdom*, as he advanced in age: But the knowledge which he had, as Man, which was sufficient to furnish him for the execution of this office, proceeded from a twofold cause, namely, the union of that nature with his divine Person, the result whereof was, his having all those perfections that belong to it, of which the knowledge of divine things is one; for it would have been a dishonour to him, as God, to be united to a nature that had the least blemish or defect, or was unqualified to perform the work which he was therein to engage in. And, besides this, our Saviour had an unction from the Holy Ghost, which, as has been already observed, implies not only his receiving a commission, but, together therewith, all necessary qualifications to discharge the work he was engaged in, which include in them his knowing the whole will of God; as it is said, *God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him*^a, that is, he gave it in a greater measure to him, than he ever did to any other, as the work, that he was to engage in, requir'd it.

2. Let us now consider what is the will of God, which Christ reveals. This includes in it every thing that relates to our salvation, or that is necessary to be known and believed by us, in order thereunto, viz. that God had an eternal design to glorify his grace, in the recovery of a part of mankind from that guilt and misery, in which they were involv'd, and putting them into the possession of complete blessedness; and that, in order hereunto, each of the Persons in the Godhead designed to demonstrate their distinct personal glory, that, in this respect, they might receive adoration and praise from men; the Father, as sending our Saviour to be a Redeemer; the Son, as taking that character and work upon him; and the Spirit, as applying the redemption purchased by him.

Moreover, he was to make a publick proclamation that salvation was attainable; and that the way to attain it, was by sinners coming to him as a Mediator,

^p Isai. lv. 4. ^q Rev. i. 5. ^r John i. 5.
^x John vi. 38. compared with Chap. xvi. 28.
^y John iii. 34.

^t Isai. lx. 1. ^u Mal. iv. 2. ^v Rev. xxii. 16.
^z Chap. viii. 28, 38. ^a See Pag. 164, 165.

414 *The Persons to whom, and how Christ reveals the Will of God.*

by whom they might have access to the Father; and to invite them to come to him by faith, as he often does in the gospel. He was also to let them know, that this faith is the gift of God, and in what way they may expect to attain it, to wit, in a constant attendance on the ordinances of his own appointment; and, to encourage them hereunto, that there are many great and precious promises, which are all put into his hand, to apply and make good to his people. These, and many other things, which contain in them the sum and substance of the gospel, are what we understand by the will of God, which Christ communicates, as a Prophet, to his church. And it may be observed, that these doctrines are such as are matter of pure revelation, which could not have been known without it, as well as of the highest importance, and therefore worthy to be made known by so excellent a Person. And this leads us to consider,

III. The persons to whom Christ reveals the will of God, namely, the church; to them the lively oracles of God are committed; and they are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone. As for *the world*, which is sometimes opposed to the church, it is said, that, *by wisdom, it knew not God*^b, that is, not in such a way as he is reveal'd in the gospel; but the church, which Christ loved, and for which he gave himself, is said to be *sanctified by the word*^c, and *to them it is given, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to others it is not given*^d; so that the church is the seat, and the object of the execution of Christ's prophetic, as well as of his other offices; *They are taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus*^e.

IV. We are now to consider the way and means by which Christ reveals the will of God to the church; there are two ways by which this is done.

I. Objectively, which is an external method of instruction, the effect and consequence whereof is our hearing of him by the hearing of the ear, or, as the Apostle calls it, our *having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law*^f. This instruction Christ is said to give by the word: And this he did; first, by publishing the glad tidings of salvation in his

own Person, which he mentions, as one great end for which he was sent into the world, as he says, *I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent*^g; and accordingly he styles himself, *The Light of the world*^h; and 'tis said, that *he was anointed to preach good tidings unto the meek, sent to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*ⁱ; and when he is represented, as complying with the call of God, and *delighting to do his will*, he adds, *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving kindness, and thy truth, from the great congregation*^k. And, as Christ preached the gospel in his own Person, so, when he left the world, he gave commission to others to preach it, and his Spirit to instruct them what they should deliver, by whose inspiration his word was committed to writing, which is the fountain of all truth; and, by this means, the church attains, as at this day, the knowledge thereof.

2. Our Saviour reveals the will of God to his people, in a subjective way, which is internal, whereby he deals with their hearts, which he disposes and fits to receive the truth: Hereby he opens the eyes of the understanding, to see a beauty and glory in the gospel, and inclines all the powers and faculties of the soul to be conform'd to it; and this he does more especially in those in whom he executes his prophetic office effectually, unto salvation. This is styled, in this *Answer*, Christ's executing his prophetic office by his Spirit, as distinguished from the execution thereof by his word. We read sometimes of the Spirit's teaching us, in scripture, as our Saviour tells his disciples, that *he, viz. the Spirit, would guide them into all truth*^l; and of believers *having their souls purified, in obeying the truth thro' the Spirit*^m, and at other times of Christ's teaching by his Spirit. Now there is no essential difference between Christ's teaching as God, and the Spirit's teaching, since the divine glory of the Son and Spirit, to which this effect is attributed, is the same: But Christ's teaching by his Spirit, only denotes, as was before observed under a fore-going

^b 1 Cor. i. 21.

^c Luke iv. 43.

^d 1 Pet. i. 22.

^e Eph. v. 26.

^f John viii. 12.

^g Matt. xiii. 11.

^h Isai. lxi. 1.

ⁱ Eph. iv. 21.

^j Psal. xl. 9, 10.

^k Rom. ii. 20.

^l John xvi. 13.

Answer,

CHRIST executed his Prophetical Office in various Ages. 415

Answer, the subserviency of the Spirit's acting herein, to Christ's executing this branch of his prophetical office, whereby he demonstrates his personal gloryⁿ.

V. We are now to consider the various ages in which Christ is said to execute this office. That he did this after his incarnation; first, in his own Person, and then, by taking care that his gospel should be preached in all succeeding ages, until his second coming, has been already considered. We may also observe, that Christ executed his prophetical office before his incarnation: Thus 'tis said, that, *by his Spirit, he preached unto the spirits in prison*, that is, to the world before the flood, who are represented, in the words immediately following, as *disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing*^o; so that Noah, who was a prophet, was his inferior minister, raised up, and spirited by him, to preach to the world, which, upon that account, is called Christ's preaching, and accordingly herein he executed his prophetical office. And he is also said to have given the law from mount Sinai, as the Apostle's words seem to intimate, when he says, *Whose voice shook the earth*^p, to wit, mount Sinai, which trembled when he gave the law from thence; and that this refers to our Saviour, appears from the words immediately fore-going, wherein it is said, *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh*, namely Christ; *for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth*, to wit, from mount Sinai, or when he spake on earth, *much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him, that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth*, &c.^q.

Moreover, that he executed his prophetical office before his incarnation, and thereby led his church into the knowledge of divine truth, is evident, from the account we have, in scripture, of his appearing to them in the form of a man, or an angel, which he more frequently did, before the word of God was committed to writing, and afterwards occasionally in following ages: Thus he appear'd to Moses in the burning bush, and

sent him into Egypt to demand liberty for Israel, and afterwards he led them thro' the red sea, as appearing in the pillar of the cloud and fire; and he is described, as *the Angel which was with Moses in the church in the wilderness, which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles*^r; which is a farther proof, of what was before mention'd, that he gave the law from thence; and, while they travel'd through the wilderness, he *led them about*, or went before them, in the pillar of cloud, and *instructed them*^s; so that all the knowledge of divine things, which they attain'd to, was the result of the execution of his prophetical office unto them. And when at any time they opposed Moses, his under minister, he appear'd in Person and vindicated him; as in that particular instance, occasioned by Aaron's and Miriam's speaking against him, wherein it is said, *The Lord came down in the pillar of a cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and said, If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make my self known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream; my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house*^t; which is a farther intimation that Christ then executed his prophetical office, by inspiring the prophets, who were raised up at that time^u.

To conclude this *Head*, we may observe the difference between Christ's executing his prophetical office, before and after his incarnation. In the former of these, as was but now hinted, he occasionally assumed the likeness of the human nature, that he might the better converse with man, but was not really incarnate; in the latter, he deliver'd the mind and will of God, as dwelling in our nature. Before this, he discover'd what was necessary to be known by the church at that time, and gave them those promises which related to the work of our redemption, to be perform'd by him: But, in the present execution of his prophetical office, he opens a more glorious scene, and represents all those promises, as having their accomplishment in him, and displays the divine perfections, in bringing about our salvation, in their greatest beauty and lustre.

ⁿ See Pag. 132, 133.

^o 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.

^p Heb. xii. 26.

^q Ver. 25.

^r Acts vii. 38.

^s Deut. xxxii. 10.

^t Numb. xii. 5-7.

^u The force of this argument, and the application of these and several other scriptures to Christ, depends upon this supposition, which, we take for granted, and, were it needful, might easily be proved, that whenever a divine Person is said, in scripture, to appear in the form of an angel, or to appear in a cloud as a symbol, or emblem of his presence, this is always meant of our Saviour.

QUEST. XLIV. *How doth Christ execute the office of a Priest?*

ANSW. Christ executeth the office of a Priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice, without spot, to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people, and in making continual intercession for them.

IN considering Christ's priestly office, as described in this *Answer*, we may observe the two great branches thereof, namely, his offering himself a sacrifice; and making intercession. There are several scriptures which expressly mention both of them: Thus he is said, *through the eternal Spirit, to have offer'd himself, without spot, to God*^x, and then described as having *enter'd into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us*^y; and elsewhere the Apostle speaks of him, as *having an unchangeable priesthood, and being able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him*, and that this is founded on his offering up himself, and making intercession for them^z. In considering this, we may observe,

I. The reason of his being stiled a Priest, which denomination was taken from those who exercised the priestly office under the ceremonial law, who were types of him, as such; accordingly we may consider,

1. That the office of the priesthood was executed by sundry persons, appointed to this service. A priest was a publick minister, who was to serve at the altar, *to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*^a. That these were offer'd in all the ages of the church, after the fall of man, appears, from the sacrifice that *Abel* offer'd, which the Apostle calls an *excellent* one, and, upon this occasion, says, that *he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts*^b; and therefore it follows, that it was instituted by him: yet it does not appear that there was, in that early age of the church, a set of men solemnly and publicly invested in this office: But the heads of families are generally supposed to have been the publick ministers in holy things, and particularly priests, though they don't appear to have been

then so stiled; and thus it continued till about the time that God brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*, when, by his appointment, all the first-born of the children of *Israel* were consecrated to him; and these officiated as priests, during that small interval of time, till the priesthood was settled in the tribe of *Levi*, upon which occasion God says, *I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born, because all the first-born are mine; for on the day that I smote all the first-born, in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel*^c: And, when God gave the ceremonial law from mount *Sinai*, he appointed that tribe to minister as priests in holy things. Of these, some had one part of the ministry of the sanctuary committed to them, and others another; particularly the priesthood, or the charge of offering gifts and sacrifices, was more especially committed to the family of *Aaron*, of which the eldest son, in their respective generations, was generally advanced to the high priesthood, and other descendents from him were common priests, who acted under, or were assistants to him in all the parts of his ministry, excepting that which respected his entering into the holy of holies. These were invested in their respective offices by unction, though the High Priest's office and unction had some things peculiar in it, in which it exceeded theirs; and they were all types of Christ's priesthood, though the High Priest was so in an eminent degree; which leads us to consider,

II. The priesthood of Christ, as typified under the ceremonial law, and that either by the service which was commonly perform'd by the High Priest, and other priests under him, or as it was typified by *Melchizedek*, who is occasionally mentioned in scripture, as shadowing forth Christ's priesthood in some particular instances, which were not contained in other types thereof.

1. We shall speak concerning the priests under the law, as types of Christ's priesthood, and particularly shew wherein their priesthood agrees with, or differs from his.

(1.) Wherein they agree.

1st. Every High Priest was taken from among men, as the Apostle observes^d, and was ordained for men in things pertaining to God. And, to this we may add, that he

^x Heb. ix. 14.
^c Numb. iii. 12, 13.

^y Ver. 24.
^d Heb. v. 1.

^z Chap. vii. 24, 25, 27.

^a Heb. v. 1.

^b Heb. xi. 4.

How CHRIST's Priesthood and Aaron's agree and differ. 417

was taken from among his brethren, and so must be a member of that church, in whose name he minister'd, and of which he was the head, by the dignity of his office. In this, he was a lively type of Christ, who, in order to his being an High Priest, became man, that he might perform this ministry for men in things pertaining to God: 'Tis true, the validity of his office, or the efficacy thereof to answer its designed end, arose from the dignity of his Person, as God; yet the matter thereof, or the ministry he perform'd, requir'd that he should be taken from among men, and have all the essential properties of the human nature; so that, as the High Priest was taken out of the church, or from among his brethren, and, by office, was the head thereof, Christ was a Member of the church, and, as such, complied with those ordinances which God had instituted therein, and from the dignity of his Person and office, was the Head thereof: As a Member of it, he was exposed to the same temptations and miseries as they are, and so is able to sympathize with, and succour them under all their temptations^c; and, as the Head thereof, he manages all affairs relating to it, and expects that all his people should be entirely subjected to him.

2^{dly}. The matter of the priest's office, or the things that were offer'd by him, were, as was before observed, gifts and sacrifices offer'd for the remission of sins, which blessing could not be attain'd without shedding of blood, as the Apostle observes, *Without shedding of blood is no remission*^e. Thus Christ was to redeem his people, and procure forgiveness of sins, and make atonement for them by sacrifice, or by the shedding of blood.

3^{dly}. After the High Priest had offer'd sacrifices, there was another part of that ministry, which was peculiar to himself, in which he was an eminent type of Christ, which he perform'd but once a year, to wit, on the great day of expiation, when he went into the holiest of all within the vail, with blood and incense; the blood he sprinkled on the mercy-seat over the ark, and caused the smoke of the incense to ascend and cover the mercy-seat, and from thence he received an intimation from God, that the sacrifices, which he had offer'd for the people, were accepted, after which he went out, and blessed them, in the name of the Lord; in all

which, he was a lively type of Christ's executing his priestly office^g, who first offer'd an acceptable sacrifice for us on earth, and then enter'd into heaven, (which was typified by the priest's entering into the holy of holies) to present his sacrifice before God, and to make intercession for us; and, as the consequence hereof, he blesses his people, in turning them from all their iniquities, and in conferring all the other fruits and effects of his sacrifice upon them. Thus Christ's priesthood was shadowed forth by that ministry, which was perform'd by the priests under the ceremonial law; nevertheless,

(2.) There were many things in which they differ'd; as,

1st. The priests under the law were mere men; but Christ, though truly man, was more than a man. Though he was made, in all the essential properties of the human nature, like unto us; yet he had a divine nature, in which he was equal with God; and therefore his ministry could not but be infinitely more valuable, than that of any others, who were types of him.

2^{dly}. The priests under the law were of the tribe of *Levi*, and therefore their's is called, by the Apostle, *The Levitical priesthood*^h: But our Saviour, as man, was of the tribe of *Judah*, and therefore did not derive his priesthood from them by descent, as they did from one anotherⁱ.

3^{dly}. The sacrifices which were offer'd by the priests under the law, were no other than the blood of beasts, appointed for that purpose; but Christ offer'd his own blood^k.

4^{thly}. The priests under the law were sinners; accordingly *Aaron* was obliged, *first* to offer up sacrifice for his own sins, and then for the people's^l; but Christ need not to do this, for *he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*^m.

5^{thly}. The sacrifices offer'd by the priests under the law, could not expiate, or take away sinsⁿ; but Christ, by the offering that he has made, has *for ever perfected them that are sanctified*, or made a full atonement for all sin. Now since it is said, that it was impossible for sin to be expiated by the sacrifices under the law, we are to enquire in what sense atonement was; or could not be made thereby: If the sin was of such a nature, as that it was punishable by human judi-

^c Heb. iv. 15. compared with Chap. v. 2.

^h Heb. vii. 11.

ⁱ Chap. x. 4.

^j Chap. vii. 13, 14.

^k Chap. ix. 22.

^l Chap. ix. 12, 14.

^m Chap. ix. 3, 7. compared with Lev. xvi. 14.

ⁿ Chap. vii. 27.

^o Ver. 26.

418 How CHRIST's Priesthood and Aaron's farther differ.

cature, the making atonement by sacrifice, in many instances, put a stop to the prosecution, and took away the guilt, which the person had contracted, as to any farther proceedings of men against him; for this was an ordinance appointed by God, in which the offender had an external and visible recourse to the blood of Jesus, signified by the blood which he offer'd; and this is supposed to have been accompanied with repentance for the sin committed, which gave satisfaction to the church, as to what concern'd this matter, as offensive to them; and they could demand no more of the offender, in order to their declaring, that, so far as they were judges, his guilt was expiated, by that which was signified by the sacrifice which he brought, which was offer'd for him, and therefore the crime that he committed was pardon'd.

'Tis true, there were some crimes that were to be punish'd with death; and, in this case, the church was not to receive satisfaction by sacrifice, nor were proceedings against the guilty person to be stop'd by this means: And, among other crimes, that of wilful murder was one which admitted of no sacrifice; so, I think, the meaning of what the Psalmist says is to be understood, *Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it**, as implying, that the guilt of blood was such, that he had hereby forfeited his life, which, though no subject had power enough to take away: yet God might, for this, have set his face against him, and have cut him off, in a visible manner, from among his people, as he often did, when crimes were not punished in a legal way. This punishment God graciously remitted, when he told him, by *Nathan*, that *he had put away his sin, he should not die*†; and *David*, when he testifies his repentance in this *Psal*, would have offer'd sacrifice, but he finds that none was ordain'd for the sin he had committed. In other cases, indeed, the church was satisfied, excommunication, or some other punishment, prevented, and the offender taken into favour, by his offering sacrifice, in which

respect, this service is called making atonement for him: But, in other respects, it was impossible to expiate sin thereby, so as to procure justification in the sight of God; for they could not expiate it, as to what concerns the conscience, as 'tis said, that *these sacrifices could not make him, that did the service, perfect, as pertaining to the conscience*‡; so that that guilt of sin, which burdens the consciences of men, as having more immediately to do with God, was taken away only by Christ's sacrifice; in which respect, the efficacy hereof far exceeds all the ends and designs of the sacrifices, which were offer'd under the law. And this farther appears, inasmuch as these sacrifices were to be repeated, there being a continual remembrance of sin; for this supposes, that sin was not hereby wholly expiated in the sight of God: and, in this, they also differ from the sacrifice Christ offer'd, inasmuch as that, being effectual to take away sin, was offer'd but once^r.

6^{thly}. The priests under the law were mortal, and therefore the priesthood was successive; but Christ, as he was not from them by a lineal descent, so he had no successor in his priesthood. In this, the Apostle compares him with them, when he says, *They truly were many, because they were not suffer'd to continue, by reason of death; but this Man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood*§.

Again, as the priesthood ceased, in particular persons, by death, so the high priesthood was sometimes taken away from those that were advanced unto it, for some instances of male-administration: Thus the high priesthood, for some time, descended in the line of *Eleazar*, the elder branch of *Aaron's* family; and afterwards, during the reign of the judges, it was transfer'd to the younger branch of his family, namely, the descendents from *Ithamar*, in which line it was when *Eli* was High Priest^t; and afterwards, when his sons, by their vile behaviour, forfeited their right to the high priesthood, and God

* Psal. li. 16.

† 2 Sam. xii. 13.

‡ Heb. ix. 9.

^r Chap. x. 10, 14.

^t Chap. vii. 23.

^t It is very hard to determine the reason of the translation of the high priesthood, from *Eleazar* to *Ithamar's* family, or the exact time when this was done. The learned Dr. *Lightfoot* [See his Works, Vol. I. Pag. 51.] gives a very probable account hereof, or the best conjecture that, I think, can be made relating to it, which is this: He supposes, that *Jephthah* offer'd his daughter, not as devoting her to perpetual virginity, but by putting her to death, which was one of the most vile and inhumane actions that we read of in scripture: It was, in *Jephthah*, a sin of ignorance, arising from the disadvantage of his education, and the ill example of those from whom he took it, before he was raised up to be a judge: But the High Priest ought to have restrain'd him from it, by telling him, that it was a sin, whereas, instead thereof, it is more than probable that he was active herein, or the person by whom this sacrifice was perform'd; and consequently this was such an instance of male-administration, that, for it, the high priesthood was taken from that branch of *Aaron's* family, in which it then was, and transfer'd to another.

Of CHRIST's Priesthood, as typified by Melchizedek. 419

threatned that he would take it away from his family ^u, (which was accomplish'd when *Abiathar*, in the beginning of *Solomon's* reign, was thrust from the priesthood) it again descended, in *Zadock*, to the elder branch of *Aaron's* family.

Again, the priesthood it self was not designed to continue for ever, but only during that dispensation; after which, there was to be no altar, priests, nor sacrifice: But Christ's priesthood, as it was unalienable, so it could never be forfeited by male-administration, or descend to any other; therefore he is said to be a *Priest for ever*, which seems to be the meaning of that scripture, in which his priesthood is consider'd, as different from the *Levitical* priesthood, as *those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him, that said unto him, The Lord swear, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever* ^x; which oath not only signifies the establishing of him in his priesthood, but it secur'd to him that he should never fall from it.

There are other things in which Christ's priesthood differs from that of the priests under the law, in that *they enter'd into the holy places made with hands, but Christ into heaven it self* ^y; and then it was only the High Priest that was to enter into the holy of holies: But, as the Apostle observes, that under the gospel, in the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, all believers are admitted into the holiest of all, that is, they have access, through faith, into the presence of God, by the blood of Jesus.

And lastly, under the law, there was a certain order of men that were priests, and yet all the people were not so; but, under the gospel-dispensation, believers are stiled, an *holy and a royal priesthood*, and *the sacrifices they offer up are spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ* ^z. And this leads us,

2. To consider Christ's priesthood, as typified by *Melchizedek*, concerning whom it is said, in *Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20.* that *Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings; and he was priest of the most high God, and he blessed him, &c.* And this is refer'd to, as tending to set forth Christ's priesthood, in *Psal. cx. 4.* *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek;* and the Apostle, in *Heb. vii.* refers to these

scriptures, which are the only places of the Old Testament where this is mentioned, and applies them to Christ's priesthood, as containing many things which were not typified by the *Aaronical* priesthood. And it may be observed, that when the Apostle enters on this subject, he premises this concerning it, that it contain'd a very great difficulty, as he says, *Of whom [i. e. Melchizedek] we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered* ^a, that is, hard to be explain'd, so as to be fully understood; it will be no strange thing therefore if we cannot fully explain it, or assert some things concerning it, which are only probable; and certainly this observation of the Apostle should induce us to treat on this subject with the greatest humility and modesty. As to what we have to say concerning it, I hope we shall advance nothing contrary to the analogy of faith, how difficult soever some phrases, used in scripture, relating thereunto, may seem to be: And the method in which we shall proceed, shall be; *first*, to enquire who this *Melchizedek* was; and, *secondly*, how we have herein an eminent type of Christ's priesthood in some things, in which it was not shadowed forth by the *Aaronical* priesthood.

(1.) We shall enquire who this *Melchizedek* probably was; and here we pass by the conjecture of some who lived in an early age of Christianity, whom *Epiphanius* mentions ^b, who supposed that he was the Holy Ghost; which appears to be a very absurd notion, inasmuch as we never read, in scripture, of the Holy Ghost's appearing in the form of a man, nor of his performing any of those offices which belong to the Mediator; and therefore it is equally contrary, to the tenor of scripture, to call him the priest of the most high God, as it is to call the Father so; and thus *Melchizedek* is stiled in the scripture we are explaining. I shall add no more, as to this ungrounded opinion; but proceed to consider that which is more commonly acquiesced in, namely,

First, That he was a man: But when it is farther enquired, what man? there are three different opinions relating hereunto.

1. The *Jews* generally conclude that he was *Shem*, the son of *Noah*, as also do many other ancient and modern writers, who pay a deference to their authority and reasoning ^c.

^u 1 Sam. ii. 30. compared with *Ver. 35.* and 1 Kings ii. 35. with *Ver. 24.*

^x 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

^y Heb. v. 11.

^a Chap. vii. 21.

^b Chap. ix. 7. compared

^c Vid. *Epiph. Hær. Pag. 67. §. 7.*

^c Among the latter, is the learned Dr. *Lightfoot*. See his Works, Vol. I. Pag. 12. and Vol. II. Pag. 327.

420 *Various Opinions about Melchizedek, who he was.*

The principal thing that induces them to be of this opinion is, because it appears, from scripture-chronology, that *Shem* was living at that time, when *Abraham* return'd from the slaughter of the kings^d. And they farther add, that *Shem*, having received the patriarchal benediction from his father, might truly be reckoned the greatest man in the church, and that both as a priest and a king, as *Melchizedek* is described to be: But there are two very considerable objections against this opinion, which have weight enough in them, if not to overthrow it, at least to make it very doubtful, namely,

(1.) That *Shem's* father, mother, and descent, together with the beginning of his life, and afterwards the end thereof, were well known, the year when he was born, and the time that he lived, being particularly mentioned in scripture; and therefore the Apostle could not say concerning him, as he does concerning *Melchizedek*, that *he was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*; meaning, as most expositors suppose, that he was so, because these were not known, or mentioned in scripture.

(2.) 'Tis very plain, from scripture, that *Shem's* place of abode was not in the land of *Canaan*, and therefore he could not be said to be king of *Salem*, that is, as it is understood by the greatest number of expositors of *Jerusalem*; since this was the seat of the posterity of *Ham*, one of *Shem's* brethren, accordingly from *Canaan*, his son, that land took its name. This evidently appears from what is said in *Gen. x. 6—20.* where the *Jebusite*, *Emorite*, *Hivite*, and other inhabitants of the land of *Canaan*, are said to be the descendents of *Ham*. For these reasons, *Melchizedek* does not appear to have been *Shem*.

2. There is one learned writer who conjectures that this *Melchizedek* was *Ham*^e, which, indeed, agrees very well with the place of his residence: But there are other things which render this opinion not in the least probable; not only because the same thing may be observed of *Ham*, as was before of *Shem*, that he could not be said

to be without father, without mother, without beginning of years, and end of life: But it may farther be said concerning him, that he had not received the patriarchal benediction from *Noah*, his posterity having had a curse entail'd upon them, as it is said, in *Gen. ix. 25. Cursed be Canaan*. Therefore some question, whether *Ham* might be reckon'd a member of the church, much more whether he deserved to be called a priest of the most high God, and King of righteousness; though, 'tis true, this author^f supposes, that *Ham* was not cursed by *Noah*, but only *Canaan* his son, and his posterity; therefore he might have been an excellent person, and deserved the character given of *Melchizedek*. But there are very few who will be convinced by this method of reasoning; and therefore we pass it over, and proceed to consider,

3. That the greatest part of divines suppose, that it is not only the safest, but most probable way of solving this difficulty, to confess, that it is impossible to determine who he was, and that the Holy Ghost has purposely concealed this matter from us, that he might be a more eminent type of Christ; and therefore they suppose him to have been a certain unknown king and priest, residing in *Jerusalem*, at that time when *Abraham* was met by him, and that this ought to put a full stop to all farther enquiries about him; upon which account, it may well be said, concerning him, that he was without father, without mother, &c. that is, these were not known; and what does not appear to be, is sometimes said, in scripture, not to be. Thus concerning their opinion, who suppose that he was a man.

Secondly, There is another opinion concerning him, which, though not so commonly received as the first and third above-mentioned, which, though probably it may not be without some difficulties attending it, yet it very much deserves our consideration, namely, that *Melchizedek* was our Lord Jesus Christ himself, assuming, at that time, the form of a man, and personating a priest and a king, as he did on several occasions, designing hereby

^d We have no account of the year when this battle was fought; but 'tis evident that it was before *Isaac* was born, and consequently before *Abraham* had lived 25 years in the land of *Canaan*. And that *Shem* was then living, appears from hence, that from the flood to *Abraham's* coming into the land of *Canaan*, was 427 years, as appears by considering the sum total of the years of the lives of the patriarchs, mention'd in *Gen. xi. 10. & seq.* and also that *Terah* was 130 years old when *Abraham* was born, as appears, by comparing *Gen. xi. 32.* with *Acts vii. 4.* and *Gen. xii. 4.* and by considering *Abraham* as 75 years old, as it is there said he was, when he left *Haran*. Now *Shem* was born 98 or 100 years before the flood, as appears by comparing *Gen. v. 32.* with *Chap. xi. 10.* and *vii. 11.* Therefore, when *Abraham* went out of his country, into the land of *Canaan*, *Shem* was 525 or 527 years old; and, when *Shem* died, he was 600 years old, *Gen. xi. 10, 11.* therefore *Shem* lived more than half a hundred years after this battle was fought.

^e See *Jurieu's Critical History*, Vol. I. Chap. 11.

^f See *Critical History*, Vol. I. Pag. 110.

Arguments to prove that Melchizedek was CHRIST. 421

to prefigure his future incarnation^s. And it is argued in defence of this opinion.

1st. That when the Apostle describes him as king of *Salem*, he does not hereby intend *Jerusalem*, or that, at that time, he resided there: But, as he explains it, in the words immediately following, it implies, that he was *King of peace*, as this word *Salem* signifies; and accordingly he is set forth by two of those glorious titles, which are given him elsewhere in scripture, namely, King of righteousness, as it is said concerning him, that *a King shall reign and prosper, who is called, The Lord our righteousness^h*; and likewise, *The Prince of peaceⁱ*. And that which makes this opinion more probable, is, that it doth not appear that *Jerusalem* was called *Salem*, which is supposed to be a contraction of the word *Jerusalem* till some ages after this; for, till *David* conquer'd it, it was commonly known by the name of *Jebus^k*.

2^{dly}. The Apostle's description of him, as being *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, is rather applicable to a divine Person than a mere man. And as for the sense, which is generally given of those words, namely, that he was without father, &c. because no mention is made thereof in scripture, that is, in those two scriptures in the Old Testament, in which he is spoken of; this seems more strain'd and forc'd, than to understand them according to the proper sense of the words; and if indeed this imports nothing else, but the silence of scripture, with relation thereunto, there are many other persons who have as great a right to this character as *Melchizedek*; as *Job*, *Elijah*, &c. whereas *Melchizedek* is thus described, as distinguished from all others.

To this we may add, (which will farther strengthen this argument) what the Apostle says, that, in this respect, he was *made like the Son of God*, that is, as is generally supposed, a type of him. Now, if his being without *father, mother, descent*, &c. in the common acceptation of the words, be inconsistent with his being a type of Christ to the church, in *Abraham's* time, then certainly that cannot be the sense thereof; for he was, without doubt, a type of his priestly and kingly office to him, and the church, in his days, as well as to those who lived in following ages. Now, that he could not be

a type thereof to many, who lived in that age, is evident; for they, who lived in the place where he was born and died, knew his father, mother, descent, beginning, or end of life; therefore he was no type of Christ's eternal priesthood to them. And as for *Abraham*, though he might not know his father, mother, or descent, or the exact time when he was born, and so, in that respect, he might, in part, be made like to the Son of God, to him, as signifying, that his priestly office was not derived by descent, as the *Aaronical* priesthood descended from parents to children: yet he could not be a type of the everlasting duration of Christ's priestly office, since he was then no more without end of days, in the common sense in which that expression is taken, than *Abraham*, or any other who lived with him, who could not be supposed to know the time, or place, of their death. And if, according to the common opinion, *Melchizedek* is said to be without father, mother, descent, &c. because there is no mention thereof in scripture, this could not be a type to *Abraham*, or any other, before the word of God was committed to writing.

3^{dly}. There is another thing, which may be observed in the Apostle's description of him^l, when he says, that *he liveth*, and accordingly is opposed to those priests that *die*, by which he seems to be described as immortal, and so opposed to mortal men. 'Tis not said, that he once lived, and that we have no mention of the time of his death, but *he liveth*, which some conclude to be an ascription of that divine perfection to him, whereby he is stiled the living God, or, as it is said in one of the following *Verses*, *He ever liveth^m*, to denote his eternal priesthood; or, as he says concerning himself elsewhere, *I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermoreⁿ*.

4^{thly}. That which still makes this opinion more probable, is, the consideration of the place, where they, who defend the other side of the question, suppose he lived, and the people to whom he minister'd as a priest, which seems not agreeable to the character given him, as the greatest priest on earth. The inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, at that time, were idolaters, or, at least, they had no relation to the church of God, which was then seated in *Abraham's* family; for, when *Abraham* sojourn'd in *Gerar*, not many miles

^s This opinion is maintained by *Cunaeus*, [Vid. ejusd. Repub. Hebr. Lib. III. cap. 3.] and some others after him.

^h Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

ⁱ Isai. ix. 6.

^k 1 Chron. xi. 4.

^l Heb. vii. 8.

^m Ver. 25.

ⁿ Rev. i. 18.

422 Melchizedek prov'd to be CHRIST; *Objections answer'd.*

distant from it, in the south-west border of the land of *Canaan*, he gives this description of it, that he thought surely the fear of God was not in this place; and it can hardly be supposed that *Jebus*, or *Jerusalem*, was much better. If the *Canaanites* had been members of the true church, *Abraham* would not have lived as a stranger and sojourner amongst them, not desirous to converse with them. Since therefore *Jerusalem*, or *Salem*, was inhabited by those who were not worshippers of the true God, how could *Melchizedek* be said to be their priest, or a minister in holy things to them? for, though an holy man may be a king over a wicked people, such an one cannot well be said to be a priest to those, who desire not to be found in the exercise of God's true worship.

5^{thly}. It seems farther probable, that *Melchizedek* was not a priest, or king, whose usual place of residence was *Jerusalem*, where he minister'd and reign'd, inasmuch as we do not read that *Abraham*, at any other time, conversed, or joined with him in worship, though the place where he sojourn'd was but a few miles distant from it, which we can hardly suppose that he would have neglected to do, or that we should have had no account of any intercourse between these two men, (who must be reckon'd the greatest and best that lived on earth) besides that mentioned in the scripture we are now considering.

6^{thly}. This may be farther argued, from what the Apostle says, that *Melchizedek* blessed *Abraham*, and infers, from thence, that he was superior to him, inasmuch as *the less is blessed of the better*°. There are but two senses in which a person is said to bless another; the one is, by praying for a blessing on him, or as God's messenger, signifying, that he would bless him; and the other is, by conferring blessedness upon him, or making him blessed. Now, if *Melchizedek* had only blessed *Abraham*, in the former of these senses, which he might have done, had he been a mere man, the Apostle could not have infer'd, from hence, his superiority to *Abraham*; for the lowest of men may, in this sense, bless the greatest, that is, pray for a blessing on them, and God might employ such to declare to others that they are blessed; yet it would not follow, from hence, that they are, in this respect, greater than them. *Melchizedek* blessed *Abraham*, and therefore, as the Apostle infers, was greater than him;

and consequently he blessed him, by making him blessed, or conferring some of those blessings, which he has to bestow, as a divine Person, the Fountain of blessedness. These are the most material arguments which are brought in defence of this opinion; from whence it seems probable, that our Saviour, on this occasion, assumed the form of a Man, as he often did, and appear'd to *Abraham* with the meen and likeness of a King and Priest; as he is said elsewhere to appear to *Joshua*, in the form of a warrior, with his sword drawn in his hand, and soon discover'd to him who he was; so we may suppose, that, at this time, he appear'd to *Abraham* as a King and a Priest, and discover'd to him who he was, and the right he had to the spoils he had gain'd, of which he accepted the tithes, partly, to signify that this was to be the way in which the priesthood was to be supported in future ages; but principally to give herein a type of that divine homage, which we owe to him, as the Priest and King of his people. I will not be too tenacious of this side of the question, but, to me, it seems the more probable, especially if what is objected against it does not weaken the force of the arguments brought to support it, which are now to be consider'd.

Object. 1. The place of *Melchizedek's* residence is said to be *Salem*, or *Jerusalem*, in the land of *Canaan*, where he was a king and priest. Now this could not be said of our Lord Jesus Christ; for, as his kingdom was not of this world, so he never resided, or fix'd his abode in any part of it before his incarnation. 'Tis true, he sometimes appear'd then in the form of a Man, or an Angel, that he might occasionally converse with his people; yet he never continued long, or dwelt amongst them, till he was made flesh; whereas, *Melchizedek* seems to be described as an inhabitant of the land of *Canaan*, dwelling in *Salem*, therefore it cannot be meant of him.

Ans. This objection takes some things for granted, that will not readily be allowed, by those who entertain the contrary way of thinking, viz. that *Salem* is the name of a place, and that there he resided; whereas it may be replied to this, that it is rather a character of his person; for, if *Tzedek* be a character of his person, as signifying righteousness, why should it be denied that *Salem*, from the Hebrew word *Shalom*, is also a glorious character, belonging to his person?

especially considering the Apostle explains both of them in this sense, when he says, that these words, by interpretation, are, *King of righteousness, and King of peace*^p; and, if this be true, there is no force in the other part of the objection, taken from his residing in any particular place before his incarnation.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, that our Saviour is said to be a Priest, *after the order of Melchizedek*^q, and that *after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another Priest*^r, meaning our Saviour; therefore he cannot be the same person with *Melchizedek*.

Ans. This objection is much more material than any other, which is brought against this opinion, which, I am apt to think, determines the sentiments of many, who give into the commonly receiv'd opinion concerning him: But, as it ought to be consider'd, whether the arguments, in defence of the other side of the question, be conclusive; so it may be replied to it; that Christ might be called a Priest, after the order of *Melchizedek*, though he were the person intended by him, if we take the words in this sense; viz. that, by his appearing in the form of a Priest and a King to *Abraham*, he afforded a type, or figure, of what he would really be, and do, after his incarnation, and herein gave a specimen of his priestly and kingly office, which he would afterwards execute. And this might as well be said to be a type hereof, as any of his appearances, in the form of a man, were typical of his incarnation, which divines generally call a *Prelibation* thereof, which differs very little from the sense of the word *Type*.

As to what is said concerning another Priest arising *after the similitude of Melchizedek*, tho' it may be reckon'd a strong objection against our argument; yet let it be consider'd, that after the similitude of *Melchizedek*, imports the same thing as after the order of *Melchizedek*; and so it signifies, that there is a similitude, or likeness, between what he then appear'd to be, and what he really was, after his incarnation. And as for his being called *another Priest*, that does not imply that he was a Priest different from *Melchizedek*, but from the priests under the law; for the Apostle, as appears by the context, is comparing Christ's priesthood with the *Aaronical*; and therefore, when he executed his priestly office, after his incarnation, he might well be stiled *another*

Priest, that is, a Priest not descending from *Aaron*, but the anti-type of *Melchizedek*, as prefigured by this remarkable occurrence.

Thus concerning that difficult question, who *Melchizedek* was? All that I shall add is, whether it were Christ himself, or some other person, yet it is evident that there was herein a very eminent type of Christ's kingly and priestly office; and more especially of his priestly, as containing in it several things that were not shadowed forth by the *Aaronical* priesthood; particularly, tho' the *Aaronical* priesthood contained a type of Christ's making atonement, by shedding his blood; yet there was nothing in it that typified the glory of his Person, his immortality and sinless perfection, the eternal duration of his priesthood, or his being immediately raised up, by God, for that end; nor was there herein a type of the kingly and priestly office of Christ, as belonging to the same Person, since the priests under the law were not kings, nor the kings priests.

Moreover, *Melchizedek's* being represented as *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, plainly signifies, that the execution of his priestly office depended immediately on God, who raised him up, as an extraordinary Person, for this end, as well as that he remains a Priest for ever; so that, if we take both these types together, we have a very plain and clear representation of Christ's priestly office. And this leads us to consider,

III. The necessity of Christ's executing that part of his priestly office, which consists in his making satisfaction to divine justice. This is generally denied by those who oppose his divinity; and particularly the *Socinians*, who maintain, that God pardons sin without satisfaction. And others, who do not altogether deny the satisfaction of Christ, suppose, that God might have pardoned sin without it; but that it was more expedient to make a demand of it, than not, inasmuch as his honour, as the Governor of the world, is secured thereby, and therefore that his demanding satisfaction, is the result of his will; and accordingly, that he might have required and accepted of a satisfaction, less valuable than what was given him by our Saviour: this opinion is equally to be opposed with the former, as derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections.

Now, when we assert the necessity of satisfaction, we mean, that God could

^p Heb. vii. 2.

^q Chap. vii. 17.

^r Ver. 15.

424 *The Necessity of CHRIST's Satisfaction farther prov'd.*

not, in consistency with his holiness and justice, pardon sin without it; and that no satisfaction, short of that which Christ gave, is sufficient to answer the end designed thereby, or worthy to be accepted by God, as a price of redemption.

And, when we assert that satisfaction was necessary, we would be understood as intending it in the same sense, as forgiveness of sin, or salvation is so; the necessity hereof being conditional, or founded on this supposition, that God designed to save sinners. This, indeed, he might have refused to have done, and then there would have been no room for satisfaction to be given to his justice: But, since God designed to be reconciled to his people, and to bring them to glory, we cannot but assert the necessity of satisfaction in order thereunto; and, to prove this, let it be consider'd,

1. That the necessity hereof appears from the holiness of God; and accordingly,

(1.) Inasmuch as he is infinitely perfect, he cannot but will and love that which is most agreeable to his nature, and which contains the brightest display of his image, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, as it is said, *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness*[†]. And it follows, from hence,

(2.) That he cannot but hate, and have an infinite aversion to, what ever is contrary hereunto; for, if his love of holiness be founded in the perfection of his nature, then his hatred of sin, which is opposite to it, must be founded therein: Thus it is said, *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*[‡]; and elsewhere, *Thou hatest all workers of iniquity*[§]. Now God's hating sin, consists in his infinite opposition to it, and so it is natural to him; or in his will, to punish it; and consequent thereunto, in his actual punishing of it. If the first of these be necessary, the others must be so likewise; or, if he be a holy God, he cannot but determine to punish sin, and afterwards to put his determination in execution.

(3.) He is also obliged to manifest his hatred of sin, otherwise he could not be glorified by his creatures, as an holy God; for he cannot have the glory of any attribute ascribed to him, unless there be a visible display thereof; therefore he is obliged to demonstrate his hatred of sin, by punishing it; and, since this obligation arises from a necessity of nature, and

not barely from an act of his will, it follows, that he is obliged to punish all sin, even that which he designs to pardon: But this could not have been done without a demand of satisfaction to be given, by a surety, in the sinner's behalf, which plainly evinces the necessity of satisfaction, which was the thing to be proved.

2. This farther appears, from the punishment threaten'd by the law of God, which also is necessary. For the understanding of which, let it be consider'd,

(1.) That God cannot but give a law to intelligent creatures, who, as such, are the subjects of moral government, and therefore under a natural obligation to yield obedience to him: But this they could not do, if the law were not given and promulgated.

(2.) It was necessary for God to annex a threatening to his law, in which respect punishment would be due to those who violate it, whereby obedience might be enforced; and that fear, which is excited by it, would be an additional motive hereunto, otherwise the sinner would be ready to conclude, that he might go on in his rebellion against God with impunity.

(3.) If this law be violated, as it is by sin, the truth of God, as the result of the threatening annex'd to it, obliges him to punish it, either in our own persons, or in the person of our surety, that so the honour of his law might be secured, which he is obliged to vindicate, as it contains a bright display of the glory of his perfections.

3. If God could, consistently with his own perfections, pardon sin without satisfaction, he would not have sent his well-beloved Son to suffer for it. This plainly appears from his wisdom and goodness. It is not consistent with the glory of his wisdom, for him to bring about a thing with so much difficulty, and with such displays of his vindictive justice, in punishing one who never offended him, if he could have answer'd the great end hereof on easier terms, or have brought about the work of our salvation without it; neither does it consist with his goodness to inflict punishment, where it is not absolutely necessary, since, agreeably to this perfection, he delights rather to extend compassion, than to display his vindictive justice, if it might be avoided. Accordingly he is described, in scripture, (speaking after the manner of men) as punishing sin with a kind of regret, or reluctance[¶]: This is said to be his

[†] Psal. xi. 7.

[‡] Hab. i. 13.

[§] Psal. v. 5.

[¶] Hosea xi. 8.

The Value and Kind of Satisfaction for Sin demanded. 425

strange work^y; and that he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men^z, but, on the other hand, *delighteth in mercy*^a; therefore if he could, consistently with his perfections, have pardoned sin without satisfaction, he would not have commanded the sword of his vindictive justice to *awake against the man that is his fellow*^b, as an expedient to bring about an end, that might have been attained without it.

Moreover, if God could have pardoned sin without satisfaction, then his giving his own Son to perform it for us, would not have been such a wonderful instance of divine grace, as it is represented to be in scripture; for it would not have been the only expedient to bring about our salvation, if satisfaction were not absolutely necessary thereunto.

IV. We are now to consider what kind of satisfaction God demanded for the expiating of sin. There are many who do not pretend, in all respects, to deny the necessity of satisfaction; but, when they explain what they mean by it, it amounts to little more than a denial thereof: Thus the Heathen, who had learn'd, by tradition, that sacrifices were to be offer'd, to make atonement for sin, concluded that these were sufficient to satisfy for it, and thereby to deliver from the guilt thereof. And some of the *Jews*, in a degenerate age of the church, seem'd to have nothing else in view, and to have no regard to the spiritual meaning thereof, or their reference to Christ's satisfaction, as types of it, when they rested in them, as supposing, that the multitude of their sacrifices were sufficient to satisfy for those vile abominations, which they were guilty of; upon which occasion, God expresses the greatest dislike thereof, when he says, *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats*^c; and elsewhere he tells them, *I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices*^d. He does not mean that these were not instituted by him; but it is as though he had said, I did not hereby intend that they should be reckon'd a sufficient price to satisfy my justice for sin. And, to fence against this supposition, the Apostle says, that it

is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins^e, for they were far from being a sufficient price to satisfy God.

Moreover, the Papists speak much of human satisfactions, consisting in various penances, fastings, leading a mortified life, parting with their estates, and submitting to voluntary poverty, with a design to make atonement for sin. The main foundation of this opinion, is their supposing, that, whatever satisfaction God demands for sin, it is the result of his will, and therefore he might accept of the smallest instance of obedience and suffering, as sufficient to compensate for it, because he has deem'd it so; and therefore they distinguish between giving satisfaction to God, and to his justice. God, say they, may accept of, or be satisfied with the smallest price, instead of that which is most valuable; whereas nothing can, properly speaking, be said to satisfy justice, but that which has in it a value in proportion to what is purchased thereby. As to the former branch of this distinction, we deny that God can accept of any thing as a price of redemption, but what has a tendency to secure the glory of his perfections, and that, nothing less than an infinite price, can do, and therefore the distinction is vain, and nothing to their purpose; or, if they suppose that God can be satisfied with what justice does not conclude sufficient, then it is blasphemous, and derogatory to the divine perfections. Therefore we can allow of no satisfaction, but what tends to set forth the glory, and fulfil the demands of divine justice; accordingly, we are to consider, that the satisfaction which was demanded by the justice of God, for the expiation of sin, must contain in it two things; namely,

I. It must be of infinite value, otherwise it would not be sufficient to compensate for the injuries offer'd to the divine name, by sin which is objectively infinite, and therefore deserves a punishment proportion'd to it, and consequently the price demanded to satisfy for it, must be of equal value. The justice of God would cast the utmost contempt on any thing that falls short hereof: Thus the prophet represents one, as making a very large overture, which one would think sufficient, if a finite price were so, when he speaks, in a beautiful climax, or gradation, of coming before the Lord *with*

^y Isai. xxviii. 21.
^d Jer. vii. 22.

^z Lam. iii. 33.
^e Heb. x. 4.

^a Micah vii. 18.

^b Zech. xiii. 7.

^c Isai. i. 11.

426 *The least Degree of CHRIST's Sufferings not sufficient.*

burnt-offerings, and these well-chosen, *calves of a year old*, and a multitude of them; *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams*, a price which very few were able to give, *or with ten thousands of rivers of oyl?* in which he offers more than it was possible to give; then he ascends yet higher, and, if it were sufficient, would part with *his first-born for his transgression, the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul*; all which is reckon'd an inconsiderable price, not sufficient to procure the thing designed thereby; and therefore he that offers it, is advised, instead of pretending to satisfy divine justice by a finite price, *to walk humbly with his God*^f; and, whatever obedience he is obliged to perform, not to have the vanity to think that this is a sufficient price to answer that end.

2. Satisfaction must bear some similitude, or resemblance, as to the matter of it, to that debt which was due from those for whom it was to be given. Here we must consider what was the debt due from us, for which a demand of satisfaction was made; this was twofold.

(1.) A debt of perfect and sinless obedience, whereby the glory of God's sovereignty might be secured, and the honour of his law maintained. This debt it was morally impossible for man to pay, after his fall; for it implies a contradiction to say, that a fallen creature can yield sinless obedience; nevertheless, it was demanded of us, though fallen; for the obligation could not be disannulled by our disability to perform it.

(2.) There was a debt of punishment, which we were liable to, in proportion to the demerit of sin, as the result of the condemning sentence of the law, which threaten'd death for every transgression and disobedience. Now, if satisfaction be made to the justice of God, it must have these ingredients in it.

As to the infinite value of the price that was given, this is contested by none, but those who deny the divinity of Christ; and those arguments that have been brought in defence of that doctrine, and others, by which we have proved the necessity that our Mediator should be God, render it less needful for us, at present, to enlarge on this subject^g. But there are many, who do not deny the necessity of an infinite satisfaction, who will not allow that it is necessary that there should be a resemblance between the debt con-

tracted, and satisfaction given; and, by these, it is objected,

Object. 1. That the least instance of obedience, or one drop of Christ's blood, was a sufficient price to satisfy divine justice; in defence of which they argue, that these must be supposed to have had in them an infinite value; but nothing can be greater than what is infinite, and therefore that one single act of obedience was sufficient to redeem the whole world of fallen men, or the whole number of fallen angels, if God had pleased to order it so.

Answ. Though we do not deny that the least instance of obedience, or sufferings perform'd by our Saviour, would have been of infinite value, inasmuch as we do not conclude the infinity of obedience to consist in a multitude of acts, or in its being perfectly sinless; nor do we deem his sufferings infinite, merely because they were exquisite, or greater than what mankind are generally liable to in this world, but because they were the obedience and sufferings of a divine Person; neither do we deny, that, according to the same method of reasoning, the least act of obedience and suffering, performed by him, would have been infinite. Nevertheless, it does not follow, from hence, that this would have been a sufficient price of redemption; for the sufficiency of the price does not only rise from the infinite value thereof, but from God's will to accept of it; and he could not be willing to accept of any price, but what had a tendency to illustrate and set forth the glory of his holiness, as a sin-hating God, and of his sovereignty in the government of the world, in such a way, that the most fit means might be used to prevent the commission of it, and of his truth, in fulfilling the threatnings denounced, which man was exposed to, by his violating the law. Now these ends could not be answer'd by one single instance of obedience, or suffering, and therefore God could not deem them sufficient; and it is plain that he did not, for, if he had, he would not have deliver'd our Saviour to suffer all that he did; concerning whom 'tis said, *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*^h.

Moreover, it was necessary that redemption should be brought about in such a way, as would lay the sinner under the highest obligation to admire the love, both of the Father and the Son. Now, if

^f Micah vi. 7, 8.

^g See Quest. XXXVIII.

^h Rom. viii. 32.

CHRIST'S *active Obedience* a Part of his Satisfaction. 427

Christ had perform'd only one act of obedience, or suffer'd in the least degree, this instance of condescension, though infinite, would not have had so great a tendency to answer this end; nor could it have been said, as it is, with a great emphasis of expression, that *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*¹.

Object. 2. It is objected, by others, that Christ's active obedience was no part of the satisfaction which he gave for us, inasmuch as this was a debt due from him for himself, his human nature (in which alone he could yield obedience) being under a natural obligation to perform it; therefore he could not be said to pay that debt for us, which was due for himself. As for his passive obedience, that, indeed, might be perform'd for us, because, being an innocent Person, he was not under any obligation to suffer, but by his own consent; but this cannot be said of his active obedience. And it is farther objected, that, if he had perform'd active obedience for us, this would have exempted us from an obligation to yield obedience our selves, and consequently this doctrine leads to licentiousness.

Ans. We allow that Christ, as Man, was obliged to perform obedience, as a debt due from him, as a Creature, and consequently, now he is in heaven, he is under the same obligation; though this has no reference to the work of our redemption, which was finish'd before he went thither: Nevertheless, the obedience he performed before his death, might be deem'd a part of that satisfaction which he gave to the justice of God for us; for,

(1.) His being under the law, was the result of his own voluntary consent, inasmuch as his incarnation, which was necessary to his becoming a subject, was the result of the consent of his divine will. Now, if he came into the world, and thereby put himself into a capacity of yielding obedience by his own consent, which no other person ever did, then his obedience, which was the consequence hereof, might be said to be voluntary, and so deem'd a part of the satisfaction which he gave to the justice of God in our behalf.

(2.) Tho' we do not deny that Christ's active obedience was a debt due to God for himself, yet it does not follow, from hence, that it may not be imputed to us, nor accepted for us; even as that perfect

obedience which was to have been perform'd by *Adam*, according to the tenor of the first covenant, though it were to have been imputed to all his posterity, was, nevertheless, primarily due from him for himself.

(3.) As to that part of the objection, in which 'tis supposed, that Christ's obedience for us, would exempt us from an obligation to yield obedience, this is generally brought, by those who desire to render this doctrine odious, and take no notice of what we say in explaining our sense thereof. Therefore, in answer to it, let it be consider'd, that, when we say Christ obey'd for us, we do not suppose that he designed hereby to exempt us from any obligation to yield obedience to God's commanding will, but only to exempt us from performing it with the same view that he did. We are not hereby excused from yielding obedience to God, as a Sovereign, but from doing it with a view of meriting thereby, or making atonement for our defect of obedience, which was the result of our fallen state; and therefore we are to say, *When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do*^k, without considering it as that righteousness, by which we are to be justified in the sight of God. We understand our obligation to yield active obedience, in the same sense, as we are obliged patiently to suffer whatever afflictions God is pleased to lay on us, from which we are not exempted by Christ's sufferings: The only difference between them is, that his sufferings were penal and satisfactory; he suffer'd for us, that hereby he might purchase for us eternal life, which is not the end of a believer's suffering; therefore, why may it not be allowed, that Christ might perform obedience for us, and we, at the same time, not be excused from it?

Object. 3. As to what concerns the sufferings of Christ, it is objected, by others, that the whole of his passive obedience was not demanded as a price of redemption for us, but only what he endured upon the cross, which was the greatest and most formidable part of his sufferings; and particularly those which he endured from the *sixth to the ninth hour*, while there was *darkness over all the land*, in which his soul was afflicted in an extraordinary manner, which occasion'd him to cry^l, *My God, my God,*

¹ Rom. v. 8.

^k Luke xvii. 10.

^l Matt. xxvii. 45, 46.

428 CHRIST *satisfied by Obedience in Life as well as in Death.*

why hast thou forsaken me?^m As for his other sufferings, endured in the whole course of his life, these are allowed to have been a convincing evidence of his love to us, and designed, as an example, to induce us to bear afflictions with patience; but that it was only his sufferings upon the cross that were satisfactory, and that was the altar on which he offer'd himself for us; which appears from those scriptures which speak of our redemption and justification, as the effect of his crucifixion and death, rather than of his sufferings in life.

Answ. To this it may be replied, that, though redemption and salvation be often attributed, in scripture, to Christ's death, or to his shedding his blood upon the cross for us, yet there is, in all of them, a figurative way of speaking, in which, by a *Synecdoche*, a part is taken for the whole; therefore his sufferings in life, though not particularly mentioned therein, are not excluded. There is one scripture, in which, by the same figurative way of speaking, our justification is ascribed to Christ's active obedience, when it is said, *By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous*ⁿ, in which, though his passive obedience be not mention'd, it is not excluded; therefore, when we read of Christ's sufferings on the cross, as being a part of his satisfaction, we are not to suppose that his sufferings in life are excluded. The Apostle plainly intimates as much, when he says, *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*^o; he humbled himself not only in his death, but in all the sufferings he endured unto it, in the whole course of his life; therefore we must conclude, that what he endured in his infancy, and that poverty, temptation, reproach, and contradiction of sinners against himself, and all the other miseries which he underwent, during the whole course of his life, which were a part of that curse which was due to us for sin, were submitted to by him to expiate it, and consequently were a part of his satisfaction.

As for the cross's being stiled, as it is, by some ancient and modern writers, the altar, on which Christ offer'd himself, we think that little more than a strain of rhetorick; or, if it be designed to illustrate the opinion we are now opposing, we

deny that it ought to be called the altar; for it is no where so stiled in scripture, neither have we ground to conclude, that the altar, upon which the sacrifices under the law were offer'd, was a type of Christ's cross in particular; and, indeed, we have a better explication of the spiritual meaning thereof, given by Christ himself, when he speaks of the *altar*, as *sanctifying the gift*^p, alluding to what is said concerning its being *most holy, and whatsoever touched it, shall be holy*^q; from whence it is infer'd, that the altar was more holy than the gift, which was laid upon it, and it signifies, that the altar, on which Christ was offer'd, added an excellency to his offering; whereas nothing could be said to do so, but his divine nature's being personally united to his human, which render'd it infinitely valuable. This is, therefore, the altar on which Christ was offer'd; or, at least, this is that which sanctified the offering, and not the cross on which he suffer'd^r.

V. We shall now prove, that what Christ did and suffer'd, was with a design to give satisfaction to the justice of God, and that what he offer'd, was a true and proper sacrifice for sin. All allow, that Christ obeyed and suffer'd; and even the *Socinians* themselves will not deny that Christ suffered for us, since this is so plainly contained in scripture: But the main stress of the controversy lies in this; whether Christ died merely for our good, namely, that we might be hereby induced to believe the truth of the doctrines he deliver'd, as he confirmed them, by shedding his blood, or that he might give us an example of patience and holy fortitude under the various evils we are expos'd to, either in life or death? This is the sense in which they understand Christ's dying for us: But there is a great deal more intended hereby, to wit, that he died in our room and stead; or that he bore that for us which the justice of God demanded, as a debt first due from us, as an expedient for his taking away the guilt of sin, and delivering us from his wrath, which we were liable to. This will appear, if we consider,

1. That he is, for this reason, stiled our Redeemer, as having purchased us hereby, or deliver'd us, in a judicial way,

^m These, which are stiled, *Passiones triborii, ultimi*, are generally called, *Pena satisfactoria*; and all his sufferings before them, *Pena convincentes*.

ⁿ Rom. v. 19.

^o Phil. ii. 8.

^p Matt. xxiii. 19.

^q Exod. xxix. 37.

^r It is an abominable strain of blasphemy, which some Popish writers make use of, when they say not only that the cross was the altar, but that it was sacred, and had a virtue to sanctify the gift offer'd thereon, which is the foundation of that idolatrous adoration which they give to it.

out of the hand of vindictive justice, which is the most proper, if not the only sense of the word *Redemption*. The *Socinians*, indeed, speak of Christ as a Redeemer; but they understand the word in a metaphorical sense, as importing his delivering us from some evils, that we were exposed to, not by paying a price of redemption for us; but by revealing those laws, or doctrines, which had a tendency to reform the world, or laying down some rules to direct the conversation of mankind, and remove some prejudices they had entertain'd; whereas we assert, that herein he dealt with the justice of God, as offering himself a sacrifice for sin.

This appears from those scriptures that speak of his *soul*, as made an *offering for sin*^f; or his being *set forth to be a propitiation, to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins*^g; in which respect, he answered the types thereof under the law, in which atonement is said to be made by sacrifice, which, being an act of worship, was performed to God alone, whereby sin was typically expiated, and the sinner discharged from the guilt, which he was liable to; and, in this respect, Christ is said, as the Anti-type thereof, to have *offer'd himself without spot to God*, when he shed his blood for us, or to have *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*^h, and to have *given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour*.

Moreover, what he did and suffer'd, is stiled a *ransom*, or price of redemption; and accordingly they, who were concern'd therein, are said to be *bought with a price*^x; and he saith, concerning himself, that *he came not to be minister'd unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*^y. We read, in scripture, of a person's paying a sum of money, as a *ransom for his life*, when it was forfeited, by his having been the culpable occasion of the death of another^z; and if such a consideration, when exacted as a price of redemption, be stiled a ransom, a person's laying down his life for another, may, with equal propriety, be so called: and this Christ is said, in many scriptures, to have done for us, upon which account he is stiled our Redeemer.

Object. We oftentimes read, in scripture, of redemption, when there is no price paid: Thus *Israel* is said to be *redeemed out of Egypt*^a, and *Babylon*^b; and

elsewhere, speaking of their deliverance out of captivity, God saith, *I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible*^c; whereas there was no price of redemption paid for their deliverance, either out of *Egypt* or *Babylon*, but it was by the immediate power of God: So *Jacob*, when he speaks of his deliverance from evil by the angel, stiles this, his *redemption from all evil*^d. Now, though we allow that the *Angel* he there speaks of, was our Lord Jesus Christ; yet the deliverance he wrought for *Jacob* was not by paying a price for him, but by exerting his divine power in order thereto.

Moreover, others are called redeemers, who have been God's ministers in delivering his people: Thus *Moses* is called a *ruler and deliverer, by the hands of the angel, which appeared to him in the bush*^e; so our translators render it^f: but it ought to be render'd a *Redeemer*, therefore there may be redemption without satisfaction.

Ans. This objection, how plausible soever it may seem to be, is not unanswerable; and the reply, which may be given to it, is, that, though deliverance from evil may be stiled *Redemption*, as it is oftentimes in scripture, the reason of its being so called, is, because of the reference which it has to that ransom that Christ was, after his incarnation, to pay for his people. This was the foundation of all that discriminating grace that God, in former ages, extended to his people: It was on the account hereof that he did not suffer them to perish in *Egypt*, or *Babylon*, and accordingly their deliverance is called a redemption from thence; whereas, we never find that any deliverance, which God wrought for his enemies, who have no concern in Christ's redemption, is so called.

And whereas *Moses* is stiled, in that scripture but now refer'd to, a *Redeemer*, the deliverance he wrought for them, as an instrument made use of by the angel that appeared to him, may, without any impropriety of expression, be called a redemption, and he a redeemer, inasmuch as that deliverance that Christ wrought by him, was founded on the purchase which he designed to pay, otherwise *Moses* would not have been so stiled.

2. There are many scriptures that speak of Christ's obedience and sufferings,

^f Isai. liii. 10.

^g Rom. iii. 25.

^h Heb. ix. 26.

^x 1 Cor. vi. 20.

^y Matt. xx. 28.

^z Exod. xxi. 29, 30.

^a Deut. vii. 8.

^b Micah iv. 10.

^c Jer. xv. 21.

^d Gen. xlviii. 16.

^e Acts vii. 35.

^f *Αὐτρεθίζω*.

430 *Objections against CHRIST's dying in our stead answer'd.*

as being in our room and stead, whereby he performed what was due from us to the justice of God, which is the proper notion of satisfaction: Thus we are to understand those expressions, in which he is said to *die for us*, as the Apostle says, *In due time Christ died for the ungodly, and while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*^h; by which we are to understand, that he endured those sufferings in life and death, which we were liable to, with a design to procure for us justification, reconciliation to God, and eternal salvation, and herein he was substituted in our room and stead, as well as died for our good^h.

That Christ died, in this sense, for his people, farther appears, from his being therein said to bear their sins, as the Apostle expresses it, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*ⁱ; and elsewhere it is said, *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed*; and *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people was he stricken*^k; all which expressions plainly denote that he suffer'd that which was due to them, or that he died in their room and stead.

And this he is farther said to do, in a sense, in which none but he, ever died for any other, and therefore much more must be understood by it, than his dying for the good of mankind. The Apostle, speaking of this matter, opposes Christ's sufferings to his own, with respect to the end and design thereof, when he saith, *Was Paul crucified for you*^l? which is as though he should say; 'Tis true, I have suffer'd many things for the church's advantage; yet it would be a vile thing for you to entertain the least surmise, as though my sufferings were endured with the same view that Christ suffer'd; for

he died as a sacrifice for sin, that he might give a price of redemption to the justice of God, which no one else ever did.

Object. 1. It is objected, to what hath been said in defence of Christ's dying in our room and stead, inasmuch as he bare our iniquities; that these expressions denote nothing else but his taking them away, which he might do, if he had not died in our room and stead: Thus we have an explication of that scripture before mentioned, which speaks of Christ's bearing our iniquities, wherein it appears that nothing is intended thereby but his taking away some afflictions we were liable to; as it is said, upon the occasion of his *casting out devils, and healing all that were sick*, that this was done *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*^m, which he might be said to do, without his dying to satisfy the justice of God for us in our room and stead.

Ans. w. There are two things to be consider'd in the death of Christ, which, though distinct, are not to be separated; one is, his bearing those griefs, sorrows, or punishments, that were due to us for sin; the other is, his taking them away, as the effect and consequence of his having born or answer'd for them; and the design of the prophet *Isaiab*, in his *liii^d Chapter*, is to shew that Christ did both these, as appears by several expressions therein; accordingly when he is said, in *Ver. 4. To have born our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, both these senses are to be applied to it; one of which is explained by the Apostle, in *1 Pet. ii. 24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*; and the Evangelist, in the text under our present consideration, explains these words of the prophet in both senses, when he saith, *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*, that is, he submitted to give satisfaction for them, and, as the consequence thereof,

^h Rom. v. 6, 8.

ⁱ There are several prepositions used, in the New Testament, in explaining this doctrine, namely, *διὰ*, *πρὸς*, *ὑπὲρ*, and *ἀντὶ*; *διὰ* and *πρὸς* refer to the occasion and cause of Christ's death, to wit, our sins: Thus 'tis said, in *Rom. iv. 25. Who was delivered for our offences*, *ὅς παρὰ ἡμῶν διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν*; and, in *1 Pet. iii. 18. Christ also hath once suffered for sins*, *πρὸς ἡμῶν ἑπ' αὐτοῦ*; and, in this case, his substitution in our room and stead is principally argued, from its being for our sins, for which death was due. As for *ὑπὲρ*, whenever it refers to Christ's sufferings, it plainly signifies his being substituted in our room and stead; as in *Rom. v. 6. Christ died, ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν, for the ungodly*; and, in *Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us*, *ὅς ἑδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*. And this is not only used in the New Testament to signify the substitution of the person dying in the room of another, or, in other instances, acting in his stead; as in *2 Cor. v. 20. Philem. Ver. 13*. But it is taken in the same sense when used in other writers, *Vid. Euripid. in Alcest. μὴ δύνασθαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ δ' ἀνδρός*; and *Demosth. in Coron. ἐγὼ τὸ ὑπὲρ οὗ ποιῶ*; and the Latin word, that answers to it, is sometimes used in the same sense. *Vid. Ter. in Andr. Ego pro te molam*. As for the preposition *ἀντὶ*, that is seldom or never used, but it signifies a substitution of one thing, or person, in the room of another: Thus when Christ is said to *give his life a ransom, ἀντὶ πολλῶν, for many*, in *Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45*; this plainly imports his being substituted in their room, as appears by the frequent use thereof in other scriptures. See *Matt. ii. 22. Chap. v. 38. and Chap. xvii. 27. Luke xi. 11. and in several other places. Vid. Grot. de satisfact. Christ. cap. 9.*

^l 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^k Isai. liii. 5—8.

ⁱ 1 Cor. i. 13.

^m Matt. viii. 16, 17.

healed

Other Ends of CHRIST's Death don't argue it not a Ransom. 431

healed those diseases which we were liable to, as the fruit of sin. The objection therefore taken from this scripture, against the doctrine we are maintaining, is of no force; for though Christ took away those miseries, which were the effects and consequences of sin, it doth not follow that he did not do this, by making satisfaction for it.

Object. 2. There are other ends of Christ's dying for us, mentioned in scripture, where, though the same mode of speaking be used, different ends are said to be attained thereby, from that of his giving satisfaction to the justice of God: Thus 'tis said, that *he gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world^a, that he might purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works^b*; and that he might hereby leave us an example that we should follow his steps^c; and, that he might acquire to himself some additional circumstances of glory, thus 'tis said, *He died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living^d*. These, and such-like ends, are said to be attained by Christ's death, which do not argue that he died in our stead, but only for our advantage.

And to this it may be added, that others are represented as suffering for the church, as well as Christ, namely, for their good, where there is no difference, in the mode of speaking, from that other scripture, in which Christ is said to die for us: Thus the Apostle saith, *I rejoyce in my sufferings for you^e*; and this he explains elsewhere, when he speaks of his being *afflicted* for the churches *consolation and salvation^f*.

Answer. We do not deny but that there are other ends designed by Christ's sufferings and death, besides his giving satisfaction to divine justice, which are the result and consequence thereof; therefore we must first consider him as dying in our stead, and then the fruits and effects, which redound to our advantage; one is so far from being inconsistent with the other, that it is necessary to it; and, in some of the scriptures but now mentioned, both these ends are expressed, the former being the ground and reason of the latter; as when it is said, *He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world*; the meaning is, he first made satisfaction for sin, and then, as the consequence thereof, in the application of redemption, he de-

signed to deliver us from the evils we are exposed to in this world; and when, in another scripture before mentioned, the Apostle speaks of *Christ's purifying to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, he mentions this not as the chief, much less as the only design of his giving himself for his people; but it is said, he did this first, *that he might redeem them from all iniquity*, namely, by giving a satisfaction to justice for them, and then that, having redeemed, he might purify them to himself; and when 'tis said, that *he died, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living*, the meaning is, that he might purchase that dominion which he hath over them as Mediator; or that having satisfied divine justice for them, as a Priest, he might have dominion over them as a King; so that these two ends are not inconsistent with each other, and therefore the latter doth not destroy the former.

And as for that scripture, in which the Apostle speaks of his sufferings for the church, or for their *consolation and salvation*, we may observe, that he doth not say that he suffer'd for them, much less in their room and stead, or as a propitiation to make reconciliation, that hereby he might promote their consolation and salvation, as Christ did; much less is it said of any besides him, that *he gave his life a ransom for them*, which is an expression peculiar to himself, wherein his death is represented as a price of redemption for them^g.

3. That Christ died in our room and stead, and consequently designed hereby to give satisfaction to the justice of God for our sin, appears from his death's being typified by the sacrifices under the ceremonial law, which, 'tis plain, were substituted in the room of the offender, for whom they were offer'd. We read *of the priest's laying his hands on the head of the sacrifice, and confessing over it the iniquities of those for whom it was offer'd*, upon which occasion 'tis said to *have born them^h*; and the consequence thereof was their being discharged from the guilt which they had contracted, which is called, making atonement for sin. Now that this was a type of Christ's making satisfaction for our sins, by his death, is evident, inasmuch as the Apostle having spoken concerning this ceremonial ordinance, applies it to him, when he saith, that *Christ was once offer'd to bear the sins*

^a Gal. i. 4.

^b Tit. ii. 14.

^c 1 Pet. ii. 21.

^d Rom. xiv. 9.

^e Col. i. 24.

^f 2 Cor. i. 6.

^g See the note in Pag. 430.

^h Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

432 CHRIST did not die principally to confirm his Doctrine.

of many^z; and elsewhere, when refering to the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, as the paschal lamb was stiled^y, he says, that *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us^z*; and, as such, he is said to be made *sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him^a*; and as they who were ordain'd to perform this service, are called *Priests*, Christ, as typified thereby, is so stiled.

I am sensible it will be objected, that the sacrifices under the ceremonial law were not instituted with a design to typify Christ's death; which would hardly have been asserted by any, as being so contrary to the sense of many scriptures, had it not been thought necessary to support the cause they maintain. But, having said something concerning this before, in considering the origin of the ceremonial law^b, I shall only add, that it is very absurd to suppose that God appointed sacrifices not as types of Christ, but to prevent their following the custom of the *Heathen*, in sacrificing to their gods, and that they did not take their rites of sacrificing from the *Jews*, but the *Jews* from them; and God, foreseeing that they would be inclined to follow their example herein, indulged them as to the matter, and only made a change with respect to the object thereof, in ordaining, that, instead of offering sacrifice to idols, they should offer it to him. But this runs counter to all the methods of providence in the government of the church, which have been so far from giving occasion to it to symbolize with the religion of the *Heathen*, in their external rites of worship, that God strictly forbid all commerce with them: Thus *Abraham* was called out of *Ur*, of the *Chaldees*, an idolatrous country, to live in the land of *Canaan*, and there he was to be no other than a stranger, or sojourner, that he might not, by too great familiarity with the inhabitants thereof, learn their ways. And afterwards the *Jews* were prohibited from having any dealings with the *Egyptians*; not because civil commerce was unlawful, but least this should give occasion to them to imitate them in their rites of worship, to prevent which the *multiplying borjes* was forbidden^c; upon which occasion the church saith, in *Hos. xiv. 3. We will not ride upon borjes, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods, that is, we will not do any thing that may be*

a temptation to us to join with the *Egyptians*, or other *Heathen* nations, in their idolatry; therefore certainly God did not ordain sacrifices in compliance with the *Heathen*; but to typify Christ's death.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove that Christ gave satisfaction to the justice of God for sin, as he was a true and proper sacrifice for it. I might, for the farther strengthening of this argument, have proved, that the end of Christ's death, assigned by the *Socinians*, namely, that he might confirm his doctrine, not that he might make atonement for sin, can hardly be reckon'd an expedient to confirm any doctrine; for there are many instances of persons having laid down their lives to confirm doctrines that have been false, and nothing more is proved hereby, but that the person believes the doctrine himself, or else is under the power of delusion or distraction; whereas a person's believing the doctrine he advances, is no evidence of the truth thereof: And as for our Saviour's confirming his doctrines, that was sufficiently done by the miracles which he wrought for that end. And, indeed, were this the only end of Christ's dying, I cannot see how it differs from the death of the Apostles, and other martyrs, for the sake of the gospel; whereas Christ laid down his life with other views, and for higher ends, than any other person ever suffer'd.

And to this we may add, that if Christ died only to confirm his doctrine, or, as it is farther alledged, by those whom we oppose, that herein he might give us an example of submission to the divine will and patience in suffering, this would have been no manner of advantage to the Old Testament-saints; for Christ could not be an example to them, nor were the doctrines, which they pretend he suffer'd to confirm, such as took place in their time; therefore Christ was no Saviour to them, neither could they reap any advantage by what he was to do and suffer; nor would they have been represented as desiring and hoping for his coming; or, as it is said of *Abraham, rejoicing to see his day^a*; and, if we suppose that they were saved, it must have been without faith in him. According to this method of reasoning, they not only militate against Christ's being a proper sacrifice; but render his cross of none effect, at least to them that lived before his incar-

CHRIST offer'd himself, by the Spirit, without Spot, to God. 433

nation; and his death, which was the greatest instance of love that could be express'd to the children of men, not absolutely necessary to their salvation.

Object. Before we close this *Head*, we shall consider an objection generally brought against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, namely, that he did not undergo the punishment due for our sins, because he did not suffer eternally; nor were his sufferings attended with that despair, and some other circumstances of punishment, which sinners are liable to in the other world.

Answer. To this it may be answer'd, that the infinite value of Christ's sufferings did compensate for their not being eternal; and, indeed, the eternity of sufferings is the result of their not being satisfactory, which cannot be applicable to those that Christ endured; and as for that despair, attended with impatience, and other sins committed by those that suffer eternal punishments; the former of these arise from the eternal duration of them; the latter, from the corruption of nature, which refuses to subscribe to the justice of God therein, while complaining of the severity of his dispensations.

Thus we have consider'd Christ's death, as a true and proper sacrifice for sin. We might now take notice of an expression that is used in this *Answer*, which is taken from the words of the Apostle, that *he once offer'd himself^a*, and that *without spot, to God^c*. This offering being sufficient to answer the end designed, there was no need of repeating it, or of his doing any thing else with the same view; the justice of God having declared it self fully satisfied when he was raised from the dead. But, having before consider'd the infinite value of what he did and suffer'd, and its efficacy to bring about the work of our redemption, whereby it appears to be more excellent than all the sacrifices that were offer'd under the ceremonial law, I need not say any more on that subject; and, as we have also consider'd Christ as being sinless, and therefore offering himself as a Lamb, without spot and blemish, and how this was the necessary result of the extraordinary formation and union of the human nature with his divine Person, and the unction which he received from the Holy Ghost; I shall only observe, at present, what is said concerning his offering himself to God. This he is said to have done, in the scripture but now re-

fer'd to, *through the eternal Spirit*, which words are commonly understood of his eternal Godhead, which added an infinite value to his sacrifice, or, like the altar, sanctified the gift, which is certainly a great truth: But it seems more agreeable, to the most known sense of the word *Spirit*, to understand it concerning his presenting, or making a tender of the service he performed by the hand of the eternal Spirit unto God, as an acceptable sacrifice.

But the main difficulty to be accounted for, in this scripture, is, what is objected by the *Socinians*, and others, who deny his deity, namely, how he could be said to offer himself to God, since that is the same as to say, that he offer'd himself to himself, he being, as we have before proved, God equal with the Father: But there is no absurdity in this assertion, if it be understood concerning the service perform'd by him in his human nature, which, though it was render'd worthy to be offer'd, by virtue of its union with his divine Person, this act of worship terminated on the Godhead, or tended to the securing the glory of the perfections of that divine nature, which is common to all the divine Persons; and it is in this sense that some ancient writers are to be understood, when they say, that Christ may be said to offer up himself to himself, that is, the service performed in the human nature was the thing offer'd, and the object hereof, to which all acts of worship are refer'd, was the divine nature, which belongs to himself as well as the Father.

VI. We shall now consider the persons for whom, as a Priest, Christ offer'd himself, and so enter on that subject, that is so much controverted in this present age, namely, whether Christ died for all men, or only for the elect, whom he designed hereby to redeem, and bring to salvation; and here let it be premised,

1. That it is generally taken for granted, by those who maintain either side of the question, that the saving effects of Christ's death do not redound to all men, or that Christ did not die, in this respect, for all the world, since to assert this would be to argue that all men shall be saved, which every one supposes contrary to the whole tenor of scripture.

2. It is allowed, by those who deny the extent of Christ's death to all men, as to what concerns their salvation, that it

^z Heb. ix. 28.
^c Deut. xvii. 16.

^y Exod. xii. 27.
^d John viii. 56.

^a 1 Cor. v. 7.

^a 2 Cor. v. 21.

^b See Pag. 382.

^a Heb. ix. 28.

^c Ver. 14.

434 CHRIST died not for all Men; but for his Sheep and Friends.

may truly be said, that there are some blessings redounding to the whole world, and more especially to those who set under the sound of the gospel, as the consequence of Christ's death; inasmuch as it is owing hereunto, that the day of God's patience is lengthen'd out, and the preaching of the gospel continued to those who are favour'd with it; and that this is attended, in many, with restraining grace, and some instances of external reformation, which (though it may not issue in their salvation) has a tendency to prevent a multitude of sins, and a greater degree of condemnation, that would otherwise ensue. These may be called the remote, or secondary ends of Christ's death, which was principally and immediately designed to redeem the elect, and to purchase all saving blessings for them, which shall be applied in his own time and way: nevertheless others, as a consequence hereof, are made partakers of some blessings of common providence, so far as they are subservient to the salvation of those, for whom he gave himself a ransom.

3. It is allowed on both sides, and especially by all that own the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, that his death was sufficient to redeem the whole world, had God designed that it should be a price for them, which is the result of the infinite value of it; therefore,

4. The main question before us is, whether God designed the salvation of all mankind by the death of Christ, or whether he accepted it as a price of redemption for all, so that it might be said, that he redeem'd some who shall not be saved by him? This is affirm'd by many, who maintain universal redemption, which we must take leave to deny. And they farther add, as an explication hereof, that Christ died that he might put all men into a salvable state, or procure a possibility of salvation for them; so that many might obtain it, by a right improvement of his death, who shall fall short of it; and also that it is in their power to frustrate the ends thereof, and so render it ineffectual. This we judge not only to be an error, but such as is highly derogatory to the glory of God, which we shall endeavour to make appear, and to establish the contrary doctrine, namely, that Christ died to purchase salvation for none but those who shall obtain it. This may be proved,

I. From those distinguishing characters

that accompany salvation, which are given to those for whom he died.

1. They are called his *sheep*, in *John* x. 11. *I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* This metaphor must certainly imply, that they, for whom Christ died, are distinguished from the world, as the objects of his immediate care, and special gracious providence: But, besides this, there are several things in the context, which contain a farther description of these *sheep*, for whom he laid down his life, which cannot be applied to the whole world: Thus 'tis said, in *Ver.* 14. *I know my sheep, and am known of them*, that is, with a knowledge of affection, as the word *Knowledge* is often used in scripture, when applied to Christ, or his people. Again, these *sheep* are farther described, as those who shall certainly obtain salvation; as our Saviour says concerning them, in *Ver.* 27, 28. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand; but this privilege, without doubt, belongs not to the whole world.*

They are also consider'd as believers, inasmuch as faith is the necessary consequence of Christ's redemption, and accordingly are distinguished from the world, or that part thereof, which is left in unbelief and impenitency: Thus Christ says, concerning those who rejected his Person and gospel, in *Ver.* 26. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.*

2. They for whom Christ died are called his *friends*, and, as such, the objects of his highest love, in *John* xv. 13. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a Man lay down his life for his friends;* and they are farther described, in the following words, as expressing their love to him, by *doing whatsoever he commandeth them*; and, as he calls them *friends*, so they are distinguished from *servants*, or slaves, who, though they may be made partakers of common favours, yet he imparts not his secrets to them; but, with respect to these, he says, in *Ver.* 15, 16. *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you:* And they are farther distinguished from the world, inasmuch as they are *chosen* by Christ, and *ordained that they should go, and bring forth fruit*; and there are several other privileges which accompany salvation, that are said to belong to these friends of Christ, for whom he died.

Object. 'Tis objected, that what Christ here

CHRIST died only for his Children. Objections answer'd. 435

here says, concerning his friends, is particularly directed to his disciples, with whom, at that time, he convers'd, and these he considers as persons who had made a right improvement of his redeeming love; and therefore, that redemption, which the whole world might be made partakers of, if they would, these were like to reap the happy fruits and effects of.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that whatever promises, or privileges, Christ's disciples were made partakers of, if these do not immediately respect their character as ministers, but as Christians, they are equally to be applied to all believers. Now that what Christ says to them, whom he calls his friends, is applicable to all believers, appears from their being described as *abiding in him*, and *bringing forth much fruit*, under the powerful influence of his grace, *without whom they can do nothing*; and, when he speaks, in *Ver. 19, 26.* of the *world's hating them, because they are not of the world*, and of the *Comforter's being sent to testify of him*, in order to the confirmation of their faith, this belongs to all believers, as such; therefore they are as much described as Christ's friends, for whom he laid down his life, as his disciples, to whom he more immediately directed his discourse.

And as for the other part of the objection, namely, that these had made a right improvement of Christ's redemption, the reply that may be given to it is, that none but Christ's friends can be said to have made a right improvement of redemption, and therefore none but such have any ground to conclude that Christ died for them: But this is not the temper and character of the greater part of mankind, therefore Christ did not die for the whole world; and it is very evident, from this character which Christ gives of them, for whom he died, that either they are, or shall be of enemies made friends to him.

3. They are called, *The children of God, that were scatter'd abroad*, who should be *gather'd together in one*, as the consequence of his death, in *John xi. 52.* This gathering together in one, seems to import the same thing, with what the Apostle speaks of, as a display of the grace of the gospel, and calls it, their *being gather'd together in Christ* their Head, in *Eph. i. 10.* and one part of them he considers, as being already *in heaven*, and the other part of them *on earth*, in their way to it; and he speaks such things concern-

ing them, in the foregoing and following *Verses*, as cannot be said of any but those that shall be saved. Now, if Christ design'd, by his death, to purchase this special privilege for his children, certainly it cannot be supposed that he died for the whole world; and elsewhere the Apostle speaking, in *Heb. ii. 10.* concerning the *Captain of our salvation's being made perfect through sufferings*, considers this as a means for *bringing many sons unto glory*, which is a peculiar privilege belonging to the heirs of salvation, and not to the whole world.

Object. 1. It will be objected to this, that nothing can be proved from the words of so vile a person as *Caiaphas*, who relates this matter; and therefore, though it be contain'd in scripture, it does not prove the truth of the doctrine, which is pretended to be established thereby.

Ans. Though *Caiaphas* was one of the vilest men on earth, and he either did not believe this prophecy himself, or, if he did, he made a very bad use of it: yet this does not invalidate the prediction; for though wicked men may occasionally have some prophetick intimation concerning future events, as *Balaam* had, the instrument, which the Spirit of God makes use of in discovering them to mankind, does not render them less certain, for the worst of men may be employ'd to impart the greatest truths; therefore 'tis sufficient to our purpose, that 'tis said, in the words immediately foregoing, that *being High Priest that year, he prophesied*, as it was no uncommon thing for the High Priest to have prophetick intimations from God, to deliver to the people, whatever his personal character might be; so that we must consider this as a divine oracle, and therefore infallibly true.

Object. 2. If it be allowed, that what is here predicted was true; yet the subject-matter thereof respects the nation of the *Jews*, concerning whom it cannot be said, that every individual were in a state of salvation, and therefore it rather militates against, than proves the doctrine of particular redemption.

Ans. It is evident, that when it is said that *Christ should die for that nation*, the meaning is, the children of God in that nation; for the children of God, that dwelt there, are opposed to his children that were scatter'd abroad; and so the meaning is, Christ died that they should not perish, who have the temper and disposition of his children, where-ever the place of their residence be.

4. They

436 CHRIST died only for his Church; this evinc'd by his Love to it.

4. They for whom Christ died are called his *church*, whereof he is *the Head*; and *the Body*, of whom *he is the Saviour*, in *Eph. v. 23.* and these he is said to have loved, and given himself for, in *Ver. 25.* Now the church is distinguished from the world, as it is gather'd out of it, and the word *Church*, in this place, is taken in a very different sense, from that in which it is understood in many other scriptures: The Apostle does not mean barely a number of professing people, of which some are sincere, and others may be hypocrites, or of which some shall be saved, and others not; nor does he speak of those who are apparently in the way of salvation, as making a visible profession of the Christian religion: But it is taken for that church, which is elsewhere called *the spouse of Christ*, and is united to him by faith, and that shall, in the end, be eternally saved by him, this is very evident; for he speaks of them, as *sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word*, in *Ver. 26.* And, as to what concerns their future state, they are such as shall hereafter be *presented to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, in *Ver. 27.* Now, since it was for these that Christ died, it cannot be reasonably concluded that he died equally and alike for all mankind.

And to this we may add, that they are called *his people*, whom he designed to *save from their sins*, in *Matt. i. 21.* and also a *peculiar people*, who are described by this character, by which they are known, as being *zealous of good works*, in *Tit. ii. 14.* and, by his death, they are said not only to be redeem'd, so as to be put into the possession of the external privileges of the gospel, but *redeem'd from all iniquity*, and purified unto himself; all which expressions certainly denote those distinguishing blessings which Christ, by his death, designed to purchase for those who are the objects thereof.

II. That Christ did not die equally and alike for all mankind, appears from his death's being an instance of the highest love, and they, who are concerned herein, are, in a peculiar manner, obliged to bless him for it as such: Thus the Apostle joins both these together, when he says, in *Gal. ii. 20.* *He loved me, and gave himself for me*; and elsewhere 'tis said, in *Rev. i. 5.* *He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*; and herein 'tis said, that *God commendeth his love towards us*, in *Rom. v. 8.* as that which is with-

out a parallel. And besides, when he speaks of this love of Christ express'd herein, he seems to distinguish it from that common love which is extended to all, when he says, *Christ died for us*; and, that we may understand what he means thereby, we must consider to whom it was that this epistle was directed, namely, to such as were *beloved of God, called to be saints*, in *Chap. i. 7.* They are also described as such, who *were justified by Christ's blood*, and *who should be saved from wrath thro' him*; *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, and *who should be saved by his life*; and, as such, *who joyed in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by him had received the atonement*, in *Chap. v. 9—11.* therefore surely they, who were thus beloved by Christ, to whom he express'd his love by dying for them, must be distinguished from the world. And our Saviour speaks of this, as far exceeding all that love, which is in the breasts of men, to one another, in *John xv. 13.* *Greater love hath no man than this, that a Man should lay down his life for his friends*; therefore we have no reason to suppose that he died equally and alike for all, for then there would be an equal instance of love herein to the best and worst of men; *Judas* would have been as much beloved as *Peter*; the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ's avowed enemies and persecutors, as much beloved as his disciples and faithful followers, if there be nothing discriminating in his dying love. Therefore we must conclude that he died to procure some distinguishing blessings for a part of mankind, which all are not partakers of.

And, as this love is so great and discriminating, it is the subject-matter of the eternal praise of glorified saints: The *New Song* that is sung to him, in *Rev. v. 9.* contains in it a celebrating of his glory, as having *redeemed them to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, who were admitted into his immediate presence, as the objects of his distinguishing love. And certainly all this implies more than his purchasing the gospel-dispensation, or the discovery of the way of salvation to mankind, of whom the greatest part neglect, despise, and reap no saving advantage thereby.

III. There are some circumstances attending the death of Christ, which argue, that it was not designed for all the world; particularly, he died as a Surety, or as one

CHRIST died for them whom he has a Propriety in, and saves. 437

one who undertook to pay that debt, which the justice of God might have exacted of men in their own persons. This has already been proved; and that which may be infer'd from hence is, that if Christ, by dying, paid this debt, and, when he rose again from the dead, received a discharge from the hand of justice, then God will not exact the debt twice, so as to bring them under the condemning sentence of the law, whom Christ, by his death, has deliver'd from it: But this is certainly a privilege that does not belong to the whole world.

Moreover, some are not justified or discharged for the sake of a ransom paid, and never shall be; therefore it may be concluded, that it was not given for them.

IV. It farther appears, that Christ did not die equally and alike for all men, in that he designed to purchase that dominion over, or propriety in them, for whom he died, which would be the necessary result hereof. As they are his trust and charge, given into his hand, to be redeemed by his blood; (and, in that respect, he undertook to satisfy the justice of God for them, which he has done hereby) so, as the result hereof, he acquired a right to them, as Mediator, by redemption; and, pursuant to the eternal covenant between the Father and him, he obtained a right to bestow eternal life on all that were given to, and purchased by him. This tends to set forth the Father's glory, as he designed hereby to recover and bring back fallen creatures to himself, and it redounds to Christ's glory, as Mediator; as herein he not only discovers the infinite value of his obedience and sufferings, but all his redeem'd ones are render'd the monuments of his love and grace, and shall for ever be employ'd in celebrating his praise: But certainly this is inconsistent with his death's being ineffectual to answer this end, and consequently he died for none but those whom he will bring to glory, which he could not be said to have done, had he laid down his life for the whole world.

V. That Christ did not die, or pay a price of redemption for all the world, farther appears, in that, salvation, whether begun, carried on, or perfected, is represented, in scripture, as the application thereof; and all those graces, which are wrought by the Spirit in believers,

are the necessary result and consequence thereof. This will appear, if we consider, that when Christ speaks of his Spirit, as sent to convince of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to guide his people into all truth, he says, *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine; and shall shew it unto you*^f; the meaning of which is, that he should apply what he had purchased, whereby his glory, as our Redeemer, would be eminently illustrated; and elsewhere, when the Apostle speaks of the Spirit's work of regeneration and sanctification, he considers it as the result of Christ's death, and accordingly it is said to be *shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour*^g; and, when we read of his *redeeming them that were under the law*, their receiving the *adoption of sons*^h, and all the privileges contained in it, are consider'd, as the necessary consequence thereof; and Christ's being *not spared, but deliver'd up* unto death for those who are described as chosen; called, justified, and such as shall be hereafter glorified, is assigned, as a convincing evidence, that *God will with him freely give them all things*ⁱ. Now this cannot, with the least shadow of reason, be applied to the whole world, therefore Christ did not die for, or redeem, all mankind.

That the application of redemption may farther appear to be of equal extent with the purchase thereof, we shall endeavour to prove, that all those graces, which believers are made partakers of here, as well as compleat salvation, which is the consummation thereof hereafter, are the purchase of Christ's death. And herein we principally oppose those who defend the doctrine of universal redemption, in that open and self-consistent way, which the *Pelagians* generally take, who suppose, that faith and repentance, and all other graces, are entirely in our own power; otherwise the conditionality of the gospel-covenant, as they rightly observe, could never be defended, and they, for whom Christ died, namely, all mankind, must necessarily repent and believe. Thus a late writer^k argues, in consistency with his own scheme; whereas some others, who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, and, at the same time, that of efficacious grace, pluck down with one hand, what they build up with the other. It is the former of these that we are now principally to consider, when

^f John xvi. 14.
Pag. 110—112.

^g Tit. iii. 6.

^h Gal. iv. 5.

ⁱ Rom. viii. 32.

^k See *Whitby's Discourse, &c.*

438 CHRIST *purchas'd Grace and Glory. He intercedes not for all.*

we speak of the graces of the Spirit, as what are purchased by Christ's blood; and, that this may appear, let it be observ'd,

1. That compleat salvation is stiled, *The purchased possession*¹; and our *deliverance from the wrath to come*, is not only inseparably connected with, but contained in it, and both these are consider'd as purchased by the death of Christ^m; and the Apostle elsewhere, speaking concerning the church, as arrived to its state of perfection in heaven, and its being *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and without blemish*, that is, when its sanctification is brought to perfection, considers this, as the accomplishment of that great end of Christ's *giving himself for it*, or laying down his life to purchase itⁿ.

2. It follows, from hence, that all that grace, whereby believers are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, which is the beginning of this salvation, is the purchase of Christ's blood. Accordingly God is said to have *blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*, (or, as it may be better render'd, in what concerns heavenly things) *in Christ*^o, that is, for the sake of Christ's death, which was the purchase thereof; therefore it follows, that faith and repentance, and all other graces, which are wrought in us in this world, are purchased thereby: Thus 'tis said, *Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe*, as well as to exercise those graces, which are necessary in those who are called *to suffer for his sake*^p; and elsewhere God is said to have *exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance*, as well as *forgiveness of sins*^q; and, since his exaltation includes in it his resurrection from the dead, it plainly argues, that he died to give repentance, and consequently that this grace was purchased by him; and, when our Saviour speaks of *sending the Spirit, the Comforter, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, which comprises in it that internal work of grace that is wrought by him, he considers this, as the consequence of his leaving the world, after he had finished the work of redemption by his death, and so purchased this privilege for them^r.

VI. That Christ did not die for all man-

kind, appears from his not interceding for them; as he saith, *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine*, and not for his disciples alone, *but for them also which should believe on him through their word*^s. This farther appears from a believer's freedom from condemnation being founded on Christ's *intercession*, as well as his *death and resurrection*^t, and his being, at the same time, stiled *an Advocate with the Father*, and *a propitiation for our sins*^u.

And this may be farther argued, from the nature of Christ's intercession, which (as will be consider'd in its proper place^x) is his presenting himself, in the merit of his death, in the behalf of those for whom he suffer'd; as also from his being *always heard* in that which he pleads for^y, which argues that they shall be saved, otherwise it could not be supposed that he intercedes for their salvation: But this he cannot be said to do for all mankind, as appears by the event, in that all shall not be saved.

Object. To this it is objected, that Christ prayed for his enemies, as it was foretold concerning him, by the prophet, who saith, *He made intercession for the transgressors*^z; and this was accomplished at his crucifixion, when he saith, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*^a. That which Christ here prayed for, was forgiveness, which is a privilege connected with salvation; and this he did in the behalf of the multitude that crucified him: But it cannot reasonably be supposed, that all these were saved; therefore if Christ's death and intercession respects the same persons, and necessarily infers their salvation, then it would follow, that this rude and inhuman multitude were all saved, which they, who deny universal redemption, do not suppose.

Ans. Some, in answer to this objection, suppose, that there is a foundation for a distinction between those supplications, which Christ, in his human nature, put up to God, as being bound, by the moral law, in common with all mankind, to pray for his enemies; and his mediatorial prayer or intercession. In the former of these respects, he prayed for them; which prayer, though it argued the greatness of his affection for them, yet it did not necessarily infer their salvation: In like manner, as *Stephen*, when

¹ Eph. i. 14.

⁴ Acts v. 31.

^{*} See Quest. LV.

^m 1 Thess. i. 10. Rom. v. 9, 10.

^t John xvi. 7, 8.

^y John xi. 42.

ⁿ Eph. v. 25, 27.

^s John xvii. 9, 20.

^z Isai. liii. 12.

^o Eph. i. 3.

^t Rom. viii. 34.

^u Luke xxiii. 34.

^p Phil. i. 29.

^q 1 John ii. 1, 2.

dying,

Some absurd Consequences attend universal Redemption. 439

dying, is represented as praying for those who stoned him, when he saith, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*^b; or, as our Saviour prays for himself in the garden, *O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*^c; whereby he signifies the formidableness of the death he was to undergo, and that his human nature could not but dread such a degree of suffering: This they suppose to be different from his mediatorial intercession for his people, in which he represents the merit of his death, as what would effectually procure the blessings purchased thereby; in this latter sense, he could not be said to pray for any of those who crucified him, who are excluded from salvation.

But, since this reply to the objection hath some difficulties attending it, which render it less satisfactory, especially because it supposes that he was not heard in that which he prayed for, when he desired that God would *forgive them*, I would rather chuse to take another method in answering it, namely, that when Christ prays that God would *forgive them*, he means, that God would not immediately pour forth the vials of his wrath upon that wicked generation, as their crime deserved, but that they might still continue to be a people favour'd with the means of grace: This he prays for, and herein was answered; and his intercession for them, though it had not an immediate respect to the salvation of all of them, had, notwithstanding, a subserviency to the gathering in of his elect amongst them, whose salvation was principally intended by this intercession, as it was for them that he shed his blood; and accordingly I apprehend, that his desire that God would *forgive them*, implies the same thing as *Moses's* request, in the behalf of *Israel*, did, when he saith, *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, until now*^d; where to *pardon* intends nothing else but God's not punishing them as their sin deserved, in an immediate and exemplary way and manner.

VII. The doctrine of universal redemption hath some absurd consequences attending it, not consistent with the divine perfections; as,

1. It would give occasion for Christ to be called, the Saviour of those who shall not be eventually saved by him, the Re-

deemer of many, who are held in chains by the justice of God, and receive no saving benefit by his redemption, or for him to be said to express the highest instance of love, in dying for those who shall for ever be the objects of his hatred, which implies a contradiction; and what is this but to say, that he *delivers* those from *the wrath to come*^e, who are, and shall be for ever children of wrath? therefore we must either assert universal salvation, or deny universal redemption.

2. It will also follow from hence, that he satisfied the justice of God for all the sins of all men; for to lay down a price of redemption, is to discharge the whole debt; otherwise it would be to no purpose. Now, if he satisfied for all the sins of every man, he did this that no sin should be their ruin, and consequently he died to take away the guilt of final impenitency in those who shall perish; and therefore they have, by virtue hereof, a right to salvation, which they shall not obtain; it follows then, that, since he did not die for all the sins of all men, he did not, by his death, redeem all men.

3. If Christ died for all men, he intended hereby their salvation, or that they should live: But it is certain he did not intend the salvation of all men; for then his design must be frustrated, with respect to a part of them, for whom he died, which contains a reflection on his wisdom, as not adapting the means to the end. Moreover, this supposes that Christ's attaining the end he designed by his death, depends on the will of man, and consequently it subjects him to disappointment, and renders God's eternal purpose dependent on man's conduct.

4. Since God designed, by the death of Christ, to bring to himself a revenue of glory, in proportion to the infinite value thereof, and Christ, our great Mediator, was, as the prophet saith, to have *a portion with the great*, and to *divide the spoil with the strong*, as the consequence of his *pouring out his soul unto death*^f; it follows from thence, that if all are not saved, for whom Christ died, then the Father and the Son would lose that glory which they designed to attain hereby, as the work would be left incomplete; and a great part of mankind cannot take occasion, from Christ's redeeming them, to adore and magnify that grace, which is display'd therein, since it is not eventually conducive to their salvation.

Having endeavour'd to prove the do-

^b Acts vii. 60.

^c Matt. xxvi. 39.

^d Numb. xiv. 19.

^e 1 Thess. i. 10.

^f Isai. liii. 12.

440 *Arguments brought in Defence of universal Redemption.*

ctrine of particular redemption; we shall now consider the arguments generally brought by those who defend the contrary scheme, who suppose, that God designed, as the consequence of Christ's death, to save all mankind, upon condition of their repenting and believing, according to the tenor of the gospel-covenant, which is substituted in the room of that which was violated by man's apostasy from God, whereby sincere obedience comes in the room of that perfect obedience, which was the condition of the first covenant. This they call man's being brought into a salvable state by Christ's death; so that Christ render'd salvation possible; whereas faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, render it certain. And, so far as this concerns the design of God, in sending Christ to redeem the world, they suppose that God determined hereby to put man into such a state, that all may be saved, if they will.

And, as to what concerns the event, to wit, man's complying with the condition, they that defend universal redemption are divided in their sentiments about it; some supposing that Christ purchased faith and repentance for a certain number of mankind, namely, those who shall repent and believe, and, pursuant thereunto, will work those graces in them; whereas others, who had not these graces purchased for them, shall perish, though Christ has redeem'd them. These suppose, that redemption is both universal and particular, in different respects; *universal*, in that all, who sit under the sound of the gospel, have a conditional grant of grace contain'd therein, whereby they are put into a salvable state, or possibility of attaining salvation; and *particular*, with respect to those who shall repent and believe, and so attain salvation, in which sense they apply that scripture, in which God is said to be *the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe*^s. This some call a middle way, between the *Pelagian* and *Calvinistic* methods of reasoning about this subject; but it appears to be inconsistent with itself, inasmuch as they, who give into this hypothesis, are forced sometimes to decline what they have been contending for on one side, when press'd with some arguments brought in defence of the other; therefore we shall pass this over, and consider the self-consistent scheme, in which universal redemption is maintain'd.

The sum of all their arguments, who defend it in the *Pelagian* way, amounts to this, *viz.* that Christ died not to purchase salvation absolutely for any, but to make way for God's entering into a new or gospel-covenant with men, in which salvation is promised, on condition of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, which they suppose to be in the power of those who have the gospel. And, that the Heathen may not be excluded, though it cannot be stiled a gospel-covenant to them, there are abatements made, as to what concerns faith, founded on divine revelation, and the only condition that entitles them to salvation is their yielding sincere obedience to the law of nature, in proportion to their light.

They farther add, that this gospel-covenant must be conditional, otherwise it could not be called a *Covenant*, as wanting an essential ingredient contain'd in every covenant; and these conditions must be in our own power, otherwise the overture of salvation, depending on the performance thereof, would be illusory; and it could not be called a covenant of grace, inasmuch as there can be no grace, or favour, in promising a blessing upon impossible conditions; neither could this gospel-covenant be stiled a better covenant than that which God enter'd into with our first parents, in which the conditions were in their own power; nor could it be an expedient to repair the ruins of the fall, or bring man, in any sense, into a salvable state; so that there are not only many absurd consequences attending it, which detract from the glory of the gospel, but 'tis contrary to the holiness, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and so derogates as much from the divine perfections, as any thing that is argued in defence of universal redemption can be pretended to do. And, to sum up the whole argument, there is an appeal to scripture, as that which gives countenance to it in a multitude of instances. This is the substance of all that is said in defence of this doctrine; and, in opposition to it, we shall take leave to observe,

(1.) That it is taken for granted, but not sufficiently proved, that Christ died to purchase the covenant of grace; whereas, if the difference between the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace, be only circumstantial, as has been before observed^h, then the death of Christ is included among the conditions

^s 1 Tim. iv. 10.

^h See pag. 369, 370.

Special Redemption consistent with the Covenant of Grace. 441

of this covenant; and, if so, the covenant it self could not be the purchase thereof: But if, by Christ's purchasing the covenant of grace, they only meant his purchasing the graces given in the covenant, we are far from denying it, tho' they generally do. That therefore which we are principally to oppose is, their sense of the conditionality of the covenant of grace, and its being essential to a covenant to be conditional, namely, to depend on uncertain conditions, in our power to perform, it being, as they suppose, left to the freedom of our own will to comply with, or reject them, and thereby to establish or disannul this covenant: But having elsewhere proved that the word *Covenant* is often used in scripture, without the *Idea* of a condition annex'd to itⁱ, and also consider'd in what respects those *Ideas*, contained in a conditional covenant between man and man, are to be excluded, when we speak of a covenant between God and man^k; and having also, in maintaining the doctrine of election, endeavour'd to defend the absoluteness of God's will, and shew'd in what sense we are to understand those scriptures that are laid down in a conditional form^l, which may, with a little variation, be applied to our present argument. We shall, to avoid the repetition of things before insisted on, add nothing farther in answer to this part of the argument we are now considering, but only that it implies God to be, in many respects, like our selves, and supposes that it is in our power to frustrate, and render the death of Christ, which was the highest display of divine grace, ineffectual, and so prevent his having that glory, which he designed to bring to his own name thereby.

(2.) As to what is farther argued, concerning the covenant of grace being a better covenant than that which God made with man in innocency, and therefore that the conditions thereof must be in our own power, otherwise God, by insisting on the performance of what is impossible, subverts the design of the gospel, and the covenant hereupon ceases to be a covenant of grace; it may be replied, that though we freely own that the covenant of grace is, in many respects, better than that which God enter'd into with man in innocency, and that it would not be so, were it impossible for those, who are concerned therein, to attain the blessings

promised to the heirs of salvation; yet we cannot allow that it must necessarily be conditional, in the sense in which some understand the word, much less that the conditions thereof are in our own power, or else the design of the gospel must be concluded to be subverted.

Therefore we may take leave to observe, that, when God is said to require faith, and all other graces in this covenant-dispensation, and has connected them with salvation, this does not overthrow the grace of the covenant, but rather establish it; for grace and salvation are not only purchased for, but promised and secured to all who are redeem'd, (by the faithfulness of God, and the intercession of Christ) and shall certainly be applied to them; and, whereas the graces of the Spirit are not in our own power, this is so far from overthrowing the design of the gospel, that it tends to advance the glory thereof, as God hereby takes occasion to set forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in making his people meet for, and bringing them, at last, to glory. And, though it be not possible for all to attain salvation, this should be no discouragement to any one to attend on those means of grace, under which we are to hope for the saving effects of Christ's death, whereby we may conclude that eternal life is purchased for us, and we shall at last be brought to it.

(3.) As to what is farther alledged, concerning the covenant of grace, as designed to repair the ruins of the fall, or God's intending hereby to bring man into a salvable state; we are never told, in scripture, that what was lost by our first apostacy from God, is to be compensated by the extent of grace and salvation to all mankind; and it is not the design of the gospel to discover this to the world, but that the exceeding riches of divine grace should be *made known to the vessels of mercy, before prepared unto glory*^m. This is, as some express it, the plank that remains after the shipwreckⁿ, or the great foundation of our hope, and possibility of escaping everlasting destruction; and it is a much better ground of security, than to lay the whole stress of our salvation on the best improvements of corrupt nature, or those endeavours which we are to use to improve the liberty of our will, in order to our escaping ruin, without dependance on the divine assistance,

ⁱ See Pag. 363, 364;
post naufragium.

^k See Pag. 376.

^l See Pag. 237—239.

^m Rom. ix. 23.

ⁿ Tabula

which is the method that they take to attain salvation, who thus defend the doctrine of universal redemption.

(4.) As for our being brought into a salvable state by the death of Christ; the gospel nowhere gives all mankind ground to expect salvation, but only those who have the marks and characters of Christ's redeemed ones; and these are not brought by his death unto a mere possibility of attaining it; but the scripture represents them as having the *earnest*, or *first fruits* thereof, and speaks of *Christ in them*, as *the hope of glory*°. They are also said to be *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*°, which is more than their having a bare possibility of salvation, as the result and consequence thereof.

(5.) That which is next to be consider'd is, what concerns the doctrine of particular redemption, as being derogatory to the divine perfections, together with many absurd consequences, which are supposed to attend it. It is very common, in all methods of reasoning, and particularly in defending or opposing the doctrine of universal redemption, for persons to endeavour to make it appear, that the contrary scheme of doctrine is chargeable with absurdities; and, as we have taken the same method in opposing universal redemption, it may reasonably be expected, that the doctrine of particular redemption should have many absurd consequences charged upon it; to which we shall endeavour to reply, that thereby it may be discern'd whether the charge be just or no. And,

1. The doctrine of particular redemption is supposed to be inconsistent with the goodness of God, as it renders salvation impossible to the greatest part of mankind, and their state irretrievable by any means that can be used, and so has a tendency to lead them to despair. But to this it may be replied,

(1.) That it must be own'd, that they, for whom Christ did not die, cannot be saved; and therefore, had God described any persons by name, or given some visible character, by which it might be certainly concluded, that they were not redeem'd, it would follow from thence, that their state would be desperate. But this is not his usual method of dealing with mankind: He might, indeed, have done it, and then such would have been thereby excluded from, and not encouraged to attend on the means of grace; but he has, in wisdom and sovereignty,

concealed the event of things, with respect hereunto, from the world; and therefore there is a vast difference between men's concluding that a part of the world are excluded from this privilege, and that they themselves are included in that number. This we have no warrant to say, concerning our selves, or any others, especially so long as we are under the means of grace. There is, indeed, one character of persons in the gospel, which gives ground to conclude that Christ did not die for them, and that is what respects those who had committed the unpardonable sin. I shall not, at present, enter into the dispute whether that sin can now be committed or no, since we may be occasionally led to insist on that subject under another *Head*: But there seems to be sufficient ground to determine, either that this cannot be certainly known, since the extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits is now ceased; or, at least, that this cannot be applied to any who attend on the means of grace with a desire of receiving spiritual advantage thereby.

(2.) If Christ's not dying for the whole world be a means to lead men to despair, as salvation is hereby render'd impossible, this consequence may, with equal evidence, be deduced from the supposition, that all mankind shall not be saved, which they, who defend universal redemption, pretend not to deny: But will any one say, that this supposition leads men to despair? or ought it to be reckon'd a reflection on the divine goodness, that so many are left to perish in their fallen state by the judicial hand of God, which might have applied salvation unto all, as well as purchased it for all mankind?

2. The doctrine of particular redemption is farther supposed to be inconsistent with the preaching the gospel, which is generally stiled a door of hope; and then the dispensation we are under cannot be called a day of grace; which renders all the overtures of salvation made to sinners illusory, and contains in it a reflection, not only on the grace of God, but on his holiness.

In order to our replying to this, something must be premised to explain what we mean by a day of grace, and the hope of the gospel, which accompanies it. And here let it be consider'd,

(1.) That we don't hereby intend such a dispensation, in which all men might repent and believe, and so obtain salva-

° Eph. i. 14. Rom. viii. 23.

° Chap. v. 10.

Special Redemption consistent with preaching the Gospel. 443

tion by their own power, without the special influences of the Holy Ghost; for this would be to ascribe that to man, which is peculiar to God; nor that God will give special grace to all that sit under the sound of the gospel; for this is contrary to common observation and experience, since many make a profession of religion who are destitute of saving grace.

As for the hope of the gospel, or that door of hope that is opened therein to sinners, we cannot understand any thing else thereby, but that all, without distinction, are commanded and encouraged to wait on God in his instituted means of grace, and the event hereof must be left to him who gives or with-holds success to them, as he pleases. All have this encouragement, that, peradventure, they may obtain grace, under the means of grace; and this is not inconsistent with their being stiled a door of hope, and God is not obliged to grant sinners a greater degree of hope than this, to encourage them to wait on him in his ordinances, notwithstanding there is a farther motive inducing us hereunto, namely, that this is his ordinary way, in which he works grace; or, if God is pleased to give us desires after the efficacy of his grace, or any degree of conviction of sin and misery; this is still a farther ground of hope, though it fall short of that grace of hope that accompanies salvation.

(2.) As to what concerns the preaching of the gospel, and the overtures of salvation to all therein, which, upon the supposition of Christ's not dying for all men, they conclude to be illusory, and repugnant to the holiness of God. To this it may be replied, that we do not deny that in preaching the gospel Christ is offer'd to the chief of sinners, or that the proclamation of grace is made publick to all, without distinction: But this will not overthrow the doctrine of particular redemption, if we rightly consider what is done, in offering Christ to sinners; which, that it may be understood, let it be observ'd,

1st. That God has given us no warrant to enter into his secret determinations, respecting the event of things; or, to give any persons ground to conclude that they are redeemed, and have a warrant to apply to themselves the promise of salvation,

or any blessings that accompany it, while, in an unconverted state. Ministers are not to address their discourses to a mix'd multitude of professing Christians, in such a way, as though they knew that they were all effectually called, and chosen of God. Our Saviour compares them to *the faithful and wise steward*, whose business it is to give every one their portion of meat in due season^a; and therefore they are, consistently with what is contain'd in scripture, to tell them, that salvation is purchased for a part of mankind, and they know not but that they may be of that number; and therefore they must be importunate with God for that grace, which will be an evidence to them that they are so.

2^{dly}. When Christ is said to be offer'd to sinners, in the preaching of the gospel, that, which is intended thereby, is, his being set forth therein as a most desirable Object, altogether lovely, worthy to be embraced, and submitted to; and not only so, but that he will certainly save all whom he effectually calls, inasmuch as he has purchased salvation for them.

3^{dly}. It includes in it an informing sinners, that it is their indispensable duty and interest to believe in Christ, and, in order thereto, that they are commanded and encouraged to wait on him for that grace, which can enable them thereunto; and, as a farther encouragement, to let them know that there is a certain connection between grace and salvation; so that none, who are enabled, by faith, to come to Christ, shall be cast out, or rejected by him. This is the preaching and the hope of the gospel; and, in this sense, the overtures of salvation are made therein; which is not in the least inconsistent with the doctrine of particular redemption^r.

Object. Though this be such a method of preaching the gospel, as is consistent with the doctrine of special redemption; yet there is another way of preaching it, which is more agreeable to the express words of scripture, and founded on the doctrine of universal redemption; and accordingly sinners ought to be told, that the great God, in the most affectionate manner, expostulates with them, to persuade them to accept of life and salvation, when he represents himself, as *having no pleasure in the death of the wicked*, and, with an earnestness of expression,

^a Luke xii. 42.

^r See this insisted on, and farther explain'd, in answer to an objection, to the same purpose, against the doctrine of particular election, in *Pag. 262.*

says,

444 In what Sense GOD expostulates with Men to turn and live.

says, *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* Therefore the design of the gospel is, to let the world know that God's dealings with mankind, in general, are full of goodness; he would not have any perish, and therefore has sent his Son to redeem them all, and, as the consequence hereof, pleads with them to turn to him, that they may reap the benefits purchased thereby.

Ans. Whatever be the sense of these expostulatory expressions, which we frequently meet with in scripture, we must not suppose that they infer, that the saving grace of repentance is in our own power; for that is not only contrary to the sense of many other scriptures, but to the experience of every true penitent, whose language is like that of Ephraim, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*^c; nor must we conclude, that God designs to save those that shall not be saved; for then he could not say, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*^d. If these *Ideas*, as unworthy of God, be abstracted from the sense of such-like scriptures, we may understand them, not only in a way that is consistent with the divine perfections, but with the doctrine of particular redemption; which, that it may appear, let it be consider'd, that it is a very common thing, in scripture, for God to condescend to use human modes of speaking, and those, in particular, by which various passions are set forth; notwithstanding, we must not conclude that these passions are in God, as they are in men. Such expostulations as these, when used by us, signify, that we earnestly desire the good of others, and are often warning them of their danger: But all is to no purpose, for they are obstinately set on their own ruin, which we can by no means prevent; it being either out of our power to help them, or, if we could, it would not redound to our honour to do it. This draws forth such-like expostulations from men; but the weakness contained in them, is by no means to be applied to God: It cannot be said to be out of his power to give grace to impenitent sinners; nor, in case he has so determin'd, will it tend to his dishonour to bestow it. Now, that we may understand the sense of these scriptures, let it be consider'd,

1. That *life* and *death*, in scripture, are oftentimes used to signify the external dispensations of providence, as to what

concerns that good or evil, which God would bring on his people: Thus 'tis said, *See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil*^e; where *life* is explain'd, in the following words, as signifying their being *multiplied and blessed in the land, whither they were to go to possess it*; and when God advises them, in a following *Verse*, to *choose life*, the consequence of this is, that *both they and their seed should live, that they might dwell in the land, which the Lord swore to their fathers to give them*; and elsewhere, when God says, by the prophet *Jeremiah*, *I set before you the way of life, and the way of death*^f; he explains it, in the following words, as containing an expedient for their escaping temporal judgments, when he says, *He that abideth in the city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans, shall live*. And I cannot see any reason to conclude, but that many other expressions, of the like nature, in which God promises life, or threatens death to the house of *Israel*, by the prophets, who often warned them of their being carried into captivity, and dying in their enemies land, have a more immediate respect thereunto; and that proverbial expression, which the *Israelites* are represented as making use of, *The fathers have eaten sowre grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge*^g, seems to intimate no more than this; *q.d.* that our fathers have sinned, and thereby deserved that the nation should be ruin'd by being carried captive, and we must suffer for their sins; in answer to which, God tells them, that this proverb should not be used by them, but this evil should be brought on them for their own iniquities, or prevented by their reformation, namely, by forsaking their *idolatry, whoredom, violence, oppression*, and other abominations. And then he adds^h, *the soul that sinneth, it shall die*, that is, if you continue to commit these vile enormities, you shall be followed with all those judgments which shall tend to your utter ruin; but *if the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die*ⁱ. If this be the sense of these and such-like texts, then it was not wholly out of their own power thus to turn to God, how much soever that special grace, which accompanies salvation, be out of our power. It is one thing to say, that man cannot work a principle of grace in him-

self,

^c Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

^d Jer. xxxi. 18.

^e Isai. xlv. 10.

^f Deut. xxx. 15, 19, 20.

^g Jer. xxi. 8.

^h Ezek. xviii. 2.

ⁱ Ver. 12, 13, 17, 18.

^j Ver. 21.

How all are to repent and believe, tho' CHRIST died not for all. 445

self, or do that by his own power, which is the special gift and work of the Spirit of God, and, as the consequence thereof, have ground to expect eternal salvation; and another thing to say, that he cannot abstain from some gross enormities, as an expedient to prevent desolating judgments. But if it will not be allowed that this is the sense of all those scriptures, that promise or threaten *life* or *death*, which I do not pretend peremptorily to assert, let it be farther added,

2. That if spiritual and eternal blessings be included in the word *Life*, and the contrary in *Death*, in the scriptures but now refer'd to, we may account for the sense of them, without supposing that God designs what shall never come to pass, to wit, the universal salvation of mankind, tho' a part of them shall not be saved, by considering desire, in him, as signifying the effects of desire in men^a: Thus God's not desiring a thing, denotes it not to be the object of desire; accordingly when he desires not the death of sinners, it implies, that they ought to endeavour to avoid it, as the most formidable evil; and, on the other hand, his taking pleasure in a thing, as he does in the salvation of his people, signifies not only his intending to save them, but the inexpressible happiness which they shall attain thereby; and, when he exhorts them, as an expedient to attain this privilege, *to turn*, this signifies the inseparable connection between salvation and repentance, or turning to God, which, though it be God's gift, it is, notwithstanding, our act, and indispensable duty. Therefore, if we take this, and such-like scriptures, in either of these two senses, they are far from giving countenance to the doctrine of universal redemption.

3. There is another absurd consequence charged upon the doctrine of special redemption, namely, that it is inconsistent with our being exhorted and encouraged *to repent and believe for the remission of sins*, or *to the saving of the soul*, as scripture gives all men a warrant to do^a; and since all are commanded to exercise these graces, and to expect salvation, as connected therewith the doctrine of particular redemption, as a late writer insinuates, puts us under a necessity of believing a lye. And he farther adds, that if the condition, annex'd to the promise of salvation, be impossible, and known to be so, it gives no encouragement to set about it; and, if he who promises knows it to

be so, he promises nothing, because nothing that a person can obtain, or be the better for, whereby he is deluded, and a cheat put upon him, by pretending kindness, in making the promise, and intending no such thing^b. Thus that author represents the doctrine of particular redemption, as containing the most blasphemous consequences that words can express: He must therefore have been very sure that his argument was unanswerably just, though, I hope, we shall be able to make it appear that 'tis far from being so; which, that we may do, let it be consider'd,

(1.) That we are to distinguish between a person's being bound to believe in Christ, and to believe that Christ died for him; the first act of faith does not contain in it a person's being perswaded that Christ died for him, but that he is the Object of faith, as he is represented to be in scripture; and accordingly it supposes that we are convinced that Christ is the Messiah, that he purchased salvation for all who shall attain it, and is able to save, unto the utmost, all that come unto God by him, and also that it is our duty and interest so to do. And, since saving faith is not in our own power, but the work and gift of divine grace, we are encouraged to wait on God in his ordinances, and, with fervent prayer, to beseech him that he would work this grace in us, acknowledging, that if he should deny us this blessing, there is no unrighteousness in him; and we are to continue waiting on him, and using all those means which are in our power, though they cannot attain their end, without his blessing, and, when he is pleased to work this grace in us, we shall be enabled to put forth another act of faith, which is properly saving, as intended by that scripture, which speaks of *believing to the saving of the soul*, which consists in receiving of him, and resting on him for salvation, as hoping that he has died for us, inasmuch as he has given us that temper and disposition of soul, which is contained in that character which is given of those for whom Christ died.

(2.) We must farther distinguish between God's commanding all that sit under the sound of the gospel to believe in Christ; and his giving them ground to expect salvation, before they believe in him. Faith and repentance may be asserted to be duties incumbent on all, and demanded of them, when, at the same

^a *Passiones tribuuntur Deo quoad effectum.*

^a Acts ii. 38. Heb. x. 39.

^b See *Whitby's Discourse*, Pag. 145, 146.

446 *Grace more advanced in special Redemption than general.*

time, it don't follow that all are given to expect salvation, upon the bare declaration that they are so. Accordingly the command and encouragement is to be consider'd in this order; first, as it respects our obligation to believe; and then, as it respects our hope of salvation; and neither the former nor the latter of these does, in the least, infer that God intended to save all mankind, or gave them ground to expect salvation, who do not believe in Christ.

(3.) As to what is farther suggested, concerning salvation's being promised on such conditions, as are known, both by God and man, to be impossible, the only answer that need be given to this is, that though *with men this is impossible, yet with God all things are possible*^c. When we consider faith and repentance, as conditions connected with salvation, or as evincing our right to claim an interest in Christ, and that salvation, which is purchased by him, (in which sense, as was before observed, we do not oppose their being called conditions thereof, by those who are tenacious of that mode of speaking^d; and we do not call them impossible conditions, any otherwise than as they are so, without the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit;) we cannot think that our asserting, that it is impossible that all mankind should thus repent and believe, is a doctrine contrary to scripture, which gives us ground to conclude, that all men shall not be saved, and consequently that all shall not *believe to the saving of the soul*. And, when we consider the impossibility thereof, we do not suppose that God has given all mankind ground to expect this saving faith, upon which the blasphemous suggestion, relating to his deluding men, is founded; it is enough for us to say, that God has not told any one, who attends on his ordinances, in hope of obtaining this grace, that he will not give him faith; and more than this need not be desired by persons to induce them to perform this duty, while praying and waiting for the happy event thereof, to wit, our obtaining these graces, and so being enabled to conclude that Christ has died for us.

4. If all the absurdities before mentioned will not take place to overthrow the doctrine of particular redemption, there is another argument, which they, who oppose it, conclude to be unanswerable, namely, that it does not conduce so much to advance the grace of God, as to assert

that Christ died for all men, inasmuch as more are included herein, as the objects of divine favour, therefore God is hereby more glorified.

To this it may be replied, that it does not tend to advance the divine perfections, to suppose that God designed to save any that shall perish, for that would be to argue, as has been before consider'd, that the purpose of God, with respect to the salvation of many, is frustrated. But, since the stress of the argument is laid on the display of the glory of divine grace; that does not so much consist in the extent of favour, with respect to a greater number of persons, as it does in its being free and undeserved, and tending, for this reason, to lay the highest obligation on those who are concern'd herein, which is the most known sense of the word *Grace*.

But inasmuch as it will be objected, that this is only a criticism, respecting the sense of a word, it may be farther replied to it, that if the grace, or goodness of God be more magnified by universal, than particular redemption, as including more, who are the objects thereof, the same method of reasoning would hold good, and they might as well attempt to prove, that there must be an universal salvation of mankind; for that would be a greater display of divine goodness, than for God only to save a few; and it would be yet more eminently display'd, had he not only saved all mankind, but fallen angels. Shall the goodness of God be pretended to be reflected on, because he does not extend it to all that might have been the objects thereof, had he pleased? Has he not a right to do what he will with his own? And may not his favour be communicated in a discriminating way, whereby it will be more advanced and adored, by those who are the objects thereof, without our taking occasion from thence to reply against him, or say, what dost thou?

And to this it may be added, that they, who make use of this method of reasoning, ought to consider that it tends as much to militate against the doctrine they maintain, namely, that God hath put all mankind into a salvable state, or that Christ, by his death, procured a possibility of salvation for all; which, according to their argument, is not so great a display of the divine goodness, as though God had actually saved all mankind, which he might have done; for he might have given repentance and remission of sins to all,

^c Matt. xix. 26.

^d See Pag. 378, 379.

as well as sent his Son to die for all; therefore, upon this head of argument, universal redemption cannot be defended, without asserting universal salvation. Thus concerning those absurdities which are pretended to be fasten'd on the doctrine of particular redemption; we proceed to consider the last and principal argument that is generally brought against it, namely,

5. That it is contrary to the express words of scripture; and some speak with so much assurance, as though there were not one word in scripture, intimating, that our Lord died only for a few, or only for the elect^e; though others will own, that there are some scriptures that assert particular redemption, but that these are but few; and therefore the doctrine of universal redemption must be acquiesced in, as being maintained by a far greater number of scriptures: But, in answer to this, let it be consider'd, that it is not the number of scriptures, brought in defence of either side of the question, that will give any great advantage to the cause they maintain, unless it could be made appear that they understood them in the true and genuine sense of the Holy Ghost therein: But this is not to be pass'd over, without a farther enquiry into the sense thereof, which we shall do, and endeavour to prove that it does not overthrow the doctrine we have been maintaining, how much soever the mode of expression may seem to oppose it; and, in order hereunto, we shall first consider in what sense *all, all men, the world, all the world*, and such-like words, are taken in scripture, as well as in common modes of speaking, in those matters that do not immediately relate to the subject of universal redemption; and then we may, without much difficulty, apply the same limitations to the like manner of speaking, which we find in those scriptures which are brought for the proof of universal redemption. Here we are to enquire into the meaning of those words that are used, which seem to denote the universality of the subject spoken of, when nothing less is intended thereby, in various instances, which have no immediate reference to the doctrine of redemption. And,

(1.) As to the word *All*. It is certain, that it is often used when every individual is not intended thereby: Thus we read in *Exod. ix. 6.* that *all the cattle of Egypt died*, when the plague of murrain was

inflicted on the beasts; whereas it is said, in the following words, that *none of the cattle of the children of Israel died*; and, from *Ver. 3.* it appears that none of the *Egyptians cattle died*, save those *in the field*; and 'tis plain, that there was a great number of cattle that died not, which were reserved to be cut off by a following plague, *viz. that of hail*, in *Ver. 19.* Moreover 'tis said, in *Ver. 25.* that *the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field*; yet we read, in *Chap. x. 5.* of the locusts *eating the residue of that which escaped, and remained unto them from the hail.*

Again, we read, in *Exod. xxxii. 3.* that *all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears*, of which Aaron made the calf, which they worshipped; whereas it is not probable that all wore ear-rings; and it is certain, that all did not join with them, who committed idolatry herein; for the Apostle intimates as much, when he speaks of *some of them as being idolaters*, who *sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*^f. And some conclude, that those of the tribe of *Levi*, who *gather'd themselves unto Moses*, and join'd with him in executing the vengeance of God on the idolaters, are said to be *on the Lord's side*; not barely because they repented of their idolatry, but because they did not join with the rest in it; and, if this be the sense of the text, yet it does not appear that they were all exempted from the charge of idolatry, tho' it be said, that *all the sons of Levi were gather'd to him*; for we read, in *Ver. 29.* of *every man's slaying his son, and his brother*; and, in *Deut. xxxiii. 9.* 'tis said, on this occasion, that *they did not know their fathers, nor their children*, that is, they did not spare them; therefore some of that, as well as the other tribes, joined in the idolatry, tho' they were all gather'd to *Moses*, as being on the Lord's side.

Again, we read, in *Zeph. ii. 14.* where the prophet speaks concerning God's *destroying Syria*, and *making Nineveh desolate*, that *all the beasts of the nations shall lodge in the upper lintels of it*; by which he intends that those beasts, that generally lodge in the wilderness, or in places remote from cities, such as the *cormorant and bittern*, &c. should take up their residence in those places, which were formerly inhabited by the *Ninevites*; therefore *all the beasts* cannot be supposed to signify all that were in all parts of the world.

^e See *Whisby's Discourse*, &c. *pag. 113.*

^f 1 *Cor. x. 7.*

Again,

448 *The Words, All, &c. often denote a Part of Mankind.*

Again, the prophet *Isaiah*, in *Chap. ii. 2.* when speaking of the multitude which should come to the mountain of the Lord's house, which he expresses by *all nations coming unto it*, explains what is meant by *all nations coming to it*, in the following Verse, namely, that *many people should say, Let us go up into the mountain of the Lord*; and the prophet *Micah*, referring to the same thing, says, in *Chap. iv. 2.* that *many nations shall say, Let us go up to it*, as containing a prediction of what was to be fulfilled in the gospel-day, in those that, out of various nations, adhered to the true religion.

Again, it is said, in *1 Chron. xiv. 17.* that the fame of David went forth into all lands, which cannot be meant of those which were far remote, but those that were round about *Judea*.

Moreover, it is said, in *Matt. iii. 5, 6.* that *Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to John, and were baptised of him*, which cannot be understood in any other sense; but that a great number of them went out to him for that purpose. And when it is said, in *Matt. xxi. 26.* that *all men held John as a prophet*, 'tis not to be supposed that the *Scribes and Pharisees*, and many others, who cast contempt on him, held him to be so; but that there were a great many who esteem'd him as such. And when our Saviour says, in *Matt. x. 22.* *Ye shall be hated of all men for my names sake*, it is certain, that those that embraced Christianity are to be excluded out of their number who hated them. Again, when it is said, in *Acts ii. 5.* that *there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews of every nation under heaven*, it is not to be supposed that there were *Jews* residing in every nation, who resorted to *Jerusalem*; upon which occasion, a learned writer* puts this question, Were there any who resorted there from *England or Scotland*?

Again, we read, in *John iii. 26.* that *John's disciples came to him, complaining, that Jesus baptized, and all men came to him*, by which nothing more is to be understood, but that many, among the *Jews*, attended on his ministry, which were, by far, the smaller part of that nation. By these, and many other scriptures, that might be brought to the same purpose, it appears, that the word *All* sometimes denotes not every individual, but a part of mankind.

(2.) Let us now consider the sense in which we are to understand *the world*, or

all the world; from whence it will appear, that only a small part of the world is intended thereby in many scriptures: Thus the *Pharisees* said, upon the occasion of a number of the *Jews* following our Saviour, in *John xii. 19.* *The world is gone after him*. How small a part of the world was the *Jewish* nation? and how small a part of the *Jewish* nation attended on our Saviour's ministry? yet this is called *the world*.

Again, it is said, in *Luke ii. 1.* *There went out a decree from Augustus, that all the world should be taxed*; by which nothing more is intended than those countries that were subjected to the *Roman* empire; and, in *Acts xvii. 26.* it is said, that *these that have turn'd the world upside down, are come hither also*; which cannot be meant in any other sense, but those parts of the world where the Apostles had exercised their ministry. And when the Apostle tells the church, in *Rom. i. 8.* that *their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world*, he only means those other churches that were planted in several parts of the world. And, in *Acts xi. 28.* 'tis said, that *Agabus signified, by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world*; by which nothing is meant but all adjacent countries, which is to be taken in the same sense, as when 'tis said, in *Gen. xli. 57.* that *all countries came into Egypt to buy corn, because the famine was so sore in all lands*, that is, in the parts adjacent to *Egypt*: Thus we have sufficient ground to conclude, that *all men, the world, and all the world*, is often taken for a small part of mankind.

But, that we may be a little more particular in considering the various limitations these words are subject to in scripture, as well as in our common modes of speaking, let it be observed,

1st. That sometimes nothing is intended by *all men*, but all sorts of men, without distinction of sex, nation, estate, quality, and condition of men in the world: Thus the Apostle says, in *1 Cor. ix. 19.* *I made my self servant to all, that I might gain the more*; this he explains in the following Verses, as including men of all ranks and characters, *To the Jews, I became a Jew; to them that were under the law, as under the law; to them that were without law, as without law; to the weak, I became weak; I became all things to all men, that by any means I might gain some.*

* Vid. *Erasm.* in loc.

How All, or All the World is understood in Scripture. 449

2^{dly}. Sometimes the word *All*, or *the world*, is taken for the *Gentiles*, in opposition to the *Jews*: Thus the Apostle saith, in *Rom. xi. 12*. *Now if the fall of them, viz. the Jews, be the riches of the world*, that is, of the *Gentiles*, as he explains it in the following words; *And the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness*; and, in *Ver. 32*. he saith, *God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all*^e.

3^{dly}. *The world* is sometimes taken for those who do not believe in opposition to the church: Thus 'tis said, in *Rev. xiii. 3, 4*. *All the world wonder'd after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon*; which is farther explain'd, in *Ver. 8*. where it is said, that *all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life*; and, in *1 John v. 19*. 'tis said, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*, or, as some render it^h, *in the wicked one*, as being subject to *Satan*; but the church is exempted from that charge, notwithstanding the universality of this expression.

4^{thly}. Sometimes the word *All* is limited by the nature of the thing spoken of, which is very easy to be understood, tho' not express'd: Thus the Apostle, in *Tit. ii. 9*. exhorts *servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things*; which must be certainly understood as intending all things just, and not contrary to the laws of God, or the civil laws of the land, in which they live.

5^{thly}. The word *All* is often used, not only in scripture, but in our common modes of speaking, to signify only those, who are the objects of that thing, which is said to be done for them, and then the emphasis is laid on the action, or the person that performs it; as when we say, *All malefactors, under a sentence of death, are to be pardon'd by the king*; we mean nothing else by it, but that all, who are pardon'd, do receive their pardon from him; or when we say, that virtue renders all men happy, and vice miserable; we mean, that all who are virtuous are happy, and all who are vicious miserable; not that virtue, abstracted from the exercise thereof, makes any happy, or vice miserable; in which case, the word *All* is not taken for every individual person, but only for those who are either good or bad: And this is agreeable to the scrip-

ture-mode of speaking; as when it is said, in *Prov. xxiii. 21*. *Drowsiness shall cloath a man*, or every man, *with rags*; or, sloth reduces all to poverty; not all mankind, but all who are addicted to this vice.

Moreover, it is said, in *Psal. cxlv. 14*. *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down*; which is not to be understood, as tho' God keeps all mankind from falling, or raises every individual person that is bowed down, so as not to suffer him to sink under his burden; but that all who are upheld, or raised up, when bowed down, are made partakers of this privilege by the Lord alone.

Having shewn in what sense the word *All*, or *all the world*, is frequently used in scripture, when not applied to the doctrine of redemption; we shall now consider the application thereof unto it, whereby it may appear, that those scriptures, which are generally brought in defence of the doctrine of universal redemption, do not tend to support it, or overthrow the contrary doctrine that we are maintaining.

1. The first scripture, that is often refer'd to for that purpose, is *1 John ii. 2*. in which 'tis said, concerning our Saviour, that *he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*. For the understanding of which, we must consider, that it is more than probable that the Apostle writes this epistle to the converted *Jews*, scattered through various countries in *Asia*, as *Peter* is said to doⁱ, and *James*^k; for which reason they are called *general epistles*; as likewise this of *John* is; inasmuch as they are not address'd to particular churches among the *Gentiles*, converted to the faith, as most of the Apostle *Paul's* are. Now 'tis plain, that, in the scripture but now mentioned, when these believing *Jews* are given to understand, that *Christ is a propitiation for their sins, and not for theirs only, but for the sins of the whole world*; the meaning is, not for their sins only, who were *Jews*, but for the sins of the believing *Gentiles*, or those who were converted by the ministry of the Apostle *Paul*, who is called *the Apostle of the Gentiles*. This has been before consider'd to be the meaning of the word *World* in many scriptures; and so the sense is, that the saving effects of *Christ's* death redound to all who believe,

^e Συνέκλεισε ὁ ὁ Θεὸς τὰς πάντας εἰς ἀπίσταν, ἵνα τὰς πάντας ἐλεήσει.
^k James i. 1.

^h ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ.

ⁱ 1 Pet. i. 1.

450 Texts brought to prove universal Redemption explain'd.

throughout the world, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

2. Another scripture generally brought to prove universal redemption, is that in *Heb. ii. 9. That he, to wit, Christ, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.* For the understanding of which, we must have recourse to the words immediately following, which are plainly an illustration thereof; accordingly they, for whom Christ tasted death, are stiled *many sons*, who are to be *brought to glory*; and, in order thereunto, *Christ, the Captain of their salvation, was made perfect through sufferings*, which is an explication of his being *crowned with glory and honour, for the suffering of death*; and it plainly proves, that it was for these only that he tasted death, and that by *every man*, for whom he tasted it, is meant every one of his sons, or of those who are described, in *Ver. 11. as sanctified, and whom he is not ashamed to call brethren*; and they are farther stiled, in *Ver. 13. The children which God had given him*; so that this sense of the words being so agreeable to the context, which asserts the doctrine of particular redemption, it cannot reasonably be supposed that they are to be taken in a sense which has a tendency to overthrow it, or prove that Christ died equally and alike for all men.

3. Another scripture, brought for the same purpose, is *1 Cor. xv. 22. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* But let it be consider'd, that the Apostle is not speaking directly concerning redemption in this text, but concerning the resurrection of the dead; and, if it be understood of a glorious resurrection unto eternal life, no one can suppose that every individual of mankind shall be made partaker of this blessing, which is also obvious, from what is said in the *Verse* immediately following, where they who are said to be *made alive in Christ*, are described as such, whom he has a special propriety in, *Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*; and therefore the meaning is only this, that all of them, who shall be raised up in glory, shall obtain this privilege by Christ, whose resurrection was the first fruits thereof.

I am sensible that the reason of the application of this scripture to prove universal redemption, is principally taken from the opposition that there seems to be between the death of all mankind in *Adam*, and the life, which is obtained by Christ; and therefore they suppose, that

the happiness, which we enjoy by him, is of equal extent with the misery we sustain'd by the fall of *Adam*: But, if this were the sense of the text, it must prove an universal salvation, and not barely the possibility thereof; since the Apostle is speaking of a privilege that should be confer'd in the end of time, and not of that which we enjoy under the gospel-dispensation; accordingly it does not, in the least, answer the end for which it is brought.

4. The next scripture, by which it is supposed that universal redemption may be defended, is that in *Rom. v. 18. As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* For the understanding of which scripture, let it be consider'd, that the blessing, which is said to extend to *all*, is no less than justification of life, and not merely a possibility of attaining salvation; and, in the foregoing *Verse*, they, who are interested in this privilege, are said to *receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, and to reign in life by Jesus Christ*. Now certainly this privilege is too great to be applied to the whole world; and, indeed, that which the Apostle, in this *Verse*, considers, as being *upon all men unto justification of life*, he explains, when he says, *Many shall be made righteous; therefore the free gift, which came upon all men unto justification*, intends nothing else, but that a select number, who are said to be many, or the whole multitude of those who do, or shall believe, shall be made righteous.

Object. If it be objected, to this sense of the text, that there is an opposition between that *judgment which came by the offence of one, to wit, Adam, upon all men, unto condemnation*, and that *righteousness, which came upon all men, unto justification*; and therefore *all men* must be taken in the same sense in both parts of the *Verse*, and consequently must be extended to all the world.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that it is not necessary, nor reasonable, to suppose, that these terms of opposition have any respect to the universal extent of condemnation and justification; for the Apostle's design is not to compare the number of those who shall be justified, with that of those who were condemned by the fall of *Adam*; but to compare the two heads together, *Adam* and *Christ*, and to shew, that as we are liable to condemnation

Texts brought to prove universal Redemption explain'd. 451

tion by the one; so we obtain the gift of righteousness by the other; which is plainly the Apostle's method of reasoning, agreeable to the whole scope of the *Chapter*, as may easily be observed, by those who compare these words with several foregoing *Verses*.

5. There is another scripture brought to prove universal redemption, in 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead*; by which it is supposed, that the Apostle is here proving that all mankind are dead in sin, and that the medium by which he proves it is, Christ's dying for all men, so that the remedy is as extensive as the disease, and therefore that this is an undeniable proof of universal redemption.

But this is not a true representation of the Apostle's method of reasoning, for he designs not to prove that all were dead in sin, but to it. That this may appear, let us consider the connection of this text with what goes before: The Apostle speaks of them, in the foregoing *Verses*, as having assurance of their future salvation, and as *groaning to be clothed upon with their house, which is from heaven*; and as having *the first fruits of the Spirit*; and says, that the Apostles were *made manifest in their consciences*, that is, they had something in their own consciences that evinced the success of their ministry to them, upon which account they *had occasion to glory on their behalf*; all which expressions denote them to have been in a converted state. And the Apostle adds, in Ver. 13. *Whether we be besides our selves, or whether we be sober*, that is, whether we have a greater or less degree of fervency in preaching the gospel; *it is for God*, that is, for his glory, *and for your sakes*; for the love of Christ, that is, either his love to us, or our love to him, *constraineth us hereunto*; *because we thus judge, that if one, namely, Christ, died for all*, that is, for you all, *then were all dead*, or you all *are dead*, that is, not dead in sin, but you are made partakers of that communion which believers have with Christ in his death, whereby they are said to be dead unto sin, and unto the world; and the result hereof is, that they are obliged *to live not to themselves, but to Christ*. This seems more agreeable to the design of the Apostle, than to sup-

pose that he intends only to prove the fall of man, from his being recover'd by Christ, since there is no appearance of any argument, to the like purpose, in any other part of the Apostle's writings; whereas our being dead to sin, as the consequence of Christ's death, is what he often mentions, and, indeed, it seems to be one of his peculiar phrases: Thus he speaks of believers, as *being dead to sin*¹; and *dead with Christ*^m; and elsewhere he says, *You are dead*ⁿ, that is, you have communion with Christ, in his death, or are dead unto sin; and the Apostle speaks of *their being dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world*^o, that is, if you have communion with Christ, in his death, you are obliged not to observe the ceremonial law, which is called the *rudiments of the world*; and, in several other places, he speaks of believers being *crucified, dead, buried, and risen from the dead*, as having communion with Christ therein, or being made partakers of those benefits which he procured thereby. If, therefore, this be the Apostle's frequent mode of speaking, why may we not suppose, that, in this *Verse*, under our present consideration, he argues, that because *Christ died for them all*, therefore *they were, or they are all dead*^p? And, being thus dead, they are obliged, as he observes in the following *Verse*, *not to live to themselves, but to Christ, that died for them*, and thereby procured this privilege, which they are made partakers of. If this sense of the text be but allowed to be equally probable with the other, it will so far weaken the force thereof, as that it will not appear, from this scripture, that Christ died for all men.

6. Universal redemption is attempted to be proved, from John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*: But, if we understand *the world*, as taken for the Gentiles, as it is oftentimes in scripture, then the sense of the text seems to be this, which is not inconsistent with special redemption, namely, that the love of God, which was express'd in sending his Son to die for those whom he designed hereby to redeem, is of a much larger extent, as to the objects thereof, than it was in former ages; for it includes in it not only those who believe among the Jews,

¹ Rom. vi. 2.

^m Ver. 8.

ⁿ Col. iii. 3.

^o Chap. ii. 20.

^p It may be observed, that as, in the scriptures before mentioned, the same word *ἀπέθανον* is used, in the same tense, namely, the *second aorist*, which our translators think fit to render in the *present tense*; and therefore it may as well be render'd here in the *present tense*, and so the meaning is, *You all, for whom Christ died, are dead*.

but

452 Texts brought to prove universal Redemption explain'd.

but whosoever believes in him, throughout the world; not that their believing in him is the foundation, or cause, but the effect of his love, and is to be consider'd as the character of the persons, who are the objects thereof. In this sense, we are also to understand another scripture, in *John* i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*, that is, of all those whose sins are expiated hereby, throughout the whole world.

7. The doctrine of universal redemption is farther maintained, from our Saviour's words, in *John* vi. 33. *The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*; which is explain'd in *Ver.* 51. *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*: But it does not appear, that Christ hereby intends that his death was a price of redemption paid for all mankind; for he speaks of the application of redemption, which is express'd by his giving life, and not barely of his procuring a possibility of its being attained; and they, to whom he gives this privilege, are described as applying it to themselves, by faith, which is, doubtless, the meaning of that metaphorical expression, whereby persons are said to *eat of this bread*, or *his flesh*, so that the meaning of this scripture is, that the death of Christ is appointed, as the great means whereby all men, throughout the whole world, who apply it by faith, should attain eternal life: But this cannot be said of all, without exception; and therefore it does not from hence appear, that Christ's death was designed to procure life for the whole world.

8. There is another scripture, brought to the same purpose, in *Matt.* xviii. 11. *The Son of man is come to save that which was lost*, that is, as they suppose, all that were lost; and consequently, since the whole world was brought into a lost state by the fall, Christ came to save them. The whole stress of this argument is laid on the sense that they give of the greek word ⁹, which we render, *that which was lost*, whereby they understand every one that was lost; whereas it only denotes, that salvation supposes them, that have an interest in it, to have been in a lost state. And, indeed, the text does not seem immediately to respect the purchase of redemption, or salvation,

by Christ's shedding his blood, as a Priest, but the application thereof, in effectually calling, and thereby saving lost sinners. This is illustrated by the parable of *the lost sheep*, (in the following words,) which the shepherd brings back to the fold, upon which occasion he says, that *it is not the will of your father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish*. And this farther appears, from our Saviour's using the same mode of speaking, with this addition, that *he came to seek, as well as to save* ^r them, upon the occasion of his converting *Zaccheus*, and telling him, that *salvation was come to his house*. And this agrees well with that prediction relating to Christ's executing his prophetic office, in the salvation of his people, as being their Shepherd; in which he is represented, as saying, *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick* ^t. Moreover, the parable of the *lost sheep*, which Christ recover'd, appears by its connection with the foregoing *Verses*, to have a particular respect to those *little*, or *humble ones*, that believe in him, who went astray, by reason of some offences that were cast in their way; and therefore, when he had denounced a threatening against those who should offend any of them, and caution'd the world that they should not do this, by despising them ⁱ, he supposes this treatment would cause some of them to go astray; upon which he says, that one of his ends of coming into the world, was to seek, to save, and to recover them.

9. Universal redemption is farther argued, from the universality of divine grace; and accordingly that text is often refer'd to in *Tit.* ii. 11. *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appear'd to all men*: But this seems very remote from the sense of the Holy Ghost, in these words; for by *the grace of God* is meant the gospel, that brings the glad tidings of salvation; and its *appearing to all men*, signifies its being preached to the *Gentiles*; or suppose by *the grace of God*, we understand the display of his grace in the work of redemption; 'tis not said, that it was designed for, or applied to all men, but only that the publication thereof is more general than it had formerly been. And when the Apostle, in *Ver.* 14. speaks more particularly concerning redemption, he alters his mode of expression,

⁹ Τὸ ἀπολωλός.

^t Luke xix. 9, 10.

ⁱ Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

^r Matt. xviii. 6, 10.

and considers it, with its just limitation, with respect to the objects thereof, viz. that *he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* We shall add but one scripture more, which is brought in defence of universal redemption, viz.

10. That in which the Apostle speaks of God, in 1 Tim. iv. 10. as *the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe*, wherein universal redemption is not asserted in the same sense in which they maintain it, viz. that God hath brought all men into a salvable state, so that they may be saved if they will: But the meaning of this scripture is, that *God is the Saviour of all men*, that is, his common bounty extends it self to all, as the Psalmist observes, *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*^u, but he is more especially the Saviour of them that believe, inasmuch as they are interested in the special benefits purchased by his redemption, who are said to be *saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation*^x.

There are several other scriptures brought to prove universal redemption, as when 'tis said, that *God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*^y; and, *The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*^z, which have been before consider'd^a; and therefore we pass them over at present; and some other scriptures, from whence it is argued, that Christ died for all, because he died for some that shall perish, as when the Apostle speaks of some *false teachers, who denied the Lord that bought them*^b; and another, *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died*^c, and that in which the Apostle speaks of a person *who counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing*^d; and some other scriptures, to the like purpose, the consideration whereof I shall refer to a following Answer^e, in which the doctrine of the saints perseverance is defended.

Thus concerning the first branch of Christ's priestly office, consisting in his offering himself a sacrifice, without spot, to God, and the persons for whom this was done. We should now proceed to consider the second branch thereof, consisting in his making continual intercession for them, for whom he offer'd up himself:

But, this being particularly insisted on in a following Answer^f, we shall pass it over at present, and proceed to consider the execution of his kingly office.

QUEST. XLV. *How doth Christ execute the office of a King?*

ANSW. Christ executeth the office of a King, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them, in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their own good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

A King is a person advanc'd to the highest dignity; in this sense the word is used in scripture, and in our common acceptation thereof, as applied to men; and more particularly it denotes his having dominion over subjects, and therefore it is a relative term; and the exercise of this dominion is confined within certain limits: But, as it is applied to God, it denotes universal dominion, as the Psalmist says, *God is King of all the earth*^g; in this respect, therefore it is properly a divine perfection. That which we are led to consider, in this Answer, is, how Christ is more especially stiled a King, as Mediator. Divines generally distinguish his kingdom into that which is natural, and that which is mediatorial; the former is founded in his deity, and not received by commission from the Father, in which respect he would have been the Governor of the world, as the Father is, though man had not fallen, and there had been no need of a Mediator;

^u Psal. cxlv. 9.

^x Isai. xlv. 17.

^y 1 Tim. ii. 4.

^z 2 Pet. iii. 9.

^a See Pag. 251, 252.

^b 2 Pet. ii. 1.

^c Rom. xiv. 15.

^d Heb. x. 29.

^e See Quest. LXXIX.

^f See Quest. LV.

^g Psal. xlvii. 7.

454 Of CHRIST's Subjects; what they were before subdued by him.

the latter is, what we are more especially to consider, namely, his mediatorial kingdom, which the Psalmist intends, when he represents the Father, as saying, *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion* ^h.

The method in which we shall speak concerning Christ's kingly office, shall be by shewing who are the subjects thereof; the manner of his governing them; and the various ages in which this government is, or shall be exercised, together with the different circumstances relating to the administration of his government therein.

I. Concerning the subjects govern'd by him. These are either his *people*, or his *enemies*: The former of these are, indeed, by nature, enemies to his government, and unwilling to subject themselves to him, but they are made willing in the day of his power, are pleased with his government, and made partakers of the advantages thereof; the latter, to wit, his enemies, are forced to bow down before him, as subdued by him, though not to him; so that, with respect to his people and his enemies, he exercises his government various ways; which leads us to consider,

II. The manner in which Christ exercises his kingly government; and that,

First, With respect to his people. This government is either external and visible; or internal and spiritual, in the latter of which he exerts divine power, and brings them into a state of grace and salvation. The church is eminently the seat of this government, which will be farther observed, under a following *Answer* ⁱ; and therefore, at present, we shall only consider them as owning his government, by professing their subjection to him, and thereby separating themselves from the world; and Christ governs them, as is observed in this *Answer*, by giving them officers, laws, and censures, and many other privileges, which the members of the visible church are made partakers of, of which more in its proper place.

That which we shall principally consider, at present, is Christ's exercising his spiritual and powerful government over his elect, in those things that more immediately concern their salvation. And here we may observe,

1. Their character and temper, before they are brought, in a saving way,

into Christ's kingdom. There is no difference between them and the rest of the world, who are the subjects of satan's kingdom; their hearts are, by nature, full of enmity and rebellion against him, and they are suffer'd sometimes to run great lengths in opposing his government, and their lives discover a fixed resolution not to submit to him, whatever be the consequence thereof: *Other lords*, as the church says, *have dominion over them* ^k; *they serve divers lusts and pleasures* ^l, *walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience* ^m; and some of them have reason to stile themselves, as the Apostle Paul says he was before his conversion, *The chief of sinners* ⁿ.

Sometimes, indeed, they meet with some checks and rebukes of conscience, which, for a while, put them to a stand; and they seem inclinable to submit to Christ, as being afraid of his vengeance, or their own consciences suggest the reasonableness thereof; and this issues in some hasty resolutions, arising from the terror of their own thoughts, or the prospect of some advantage, which will accrue to them thereby, whereby their condition may be render'd better than what they, at present, apprehend it to be; and this extorts from them a degree of compliance with the gospel-overture, especially if Christ would stoop to those terms, which corrupt nature is willing to conform it self to; or make those abatements, that would be consistent with their serving *God* and *Mammon*. In this case, they are like the person whom our Saviour mentions, who being called, replies, *I go, Sir, and went not* ^o. Sometimes they promise that they will submit hereafter, if they may but be indulged in their course of life for the present, and, like *Felix*, would attend to these matters at a more convenient season; or, as one is represented, desiring our Saviour that he might *first go and bury his father* ^p; by which we are not to understand his performing that debt, which the law of nature obliged him to perform to a deceased parent, which might have been soon discharged, and been no hindrance to his following Christ: But he seems to be desirous to be excused from following him till his father was dead, and all this with a design to gain time, or to ward off present convictions, his domestick affairs in-

^h Psal. ii. 6.
ⁱ 1 Tim. i. 15.

^j See Quest. LXII, LXIII.
^o Matt. xxi. 30.

^k Isai. xxvi. 13.
^p Matt. viii. 21.

^l Tit. iii. 3.

^m Eph. ii. 2.

How CHRIST brings Sinners into Subjection to him. 455

clining him not immediately to subject himself to Christ, or to take up his lot with him, or to forsake all and follow him, though he was not insensible that this was his duty. This is the temper and character of persons before they are effectually perswaded to submit to Christ's government; and the consequence hereof is oftentimes their not only losing these convictions, but returning with stronger resolutions to their former course, and adding greater degrees of rebellion to their iniquity.

2. There are several methods used, by Christ, to bring sinners into subjection to him; some of which are principally objective, and, though not in themselves sufficient, yet, necessary to answer this end. Accordingly,

(1.) He gives them to understand that there is an inevitable necessity of perishing, if they persist in their rebellion against him, as our Saviour says, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*^a; or, as it is said elsewhere, *Who hath harden'd himself against him, and prosper'd*^b? and that the consequence thereof will be, that *those his enemies that would not that he should reign over them, shall be brought forth, and slain before him*^c. And this is not only consider'd in a general way, as what other sinners are given to expect, but impress'd on the conscience, and particularly applied to himself, whereby he is convinced that his present course is not only dangerous, but destructive, and fills him with that distress and concern of soul, which is the beginning of that work of grace, that shall afterwards be brought to perfection.

(2.) Christ holds forth his golden sceptre, and makes a proclamation to sinners to return and submit to him, and, at the same time, expresses his willingness to receive all that by faith close with the gospel-overture, and cast themselves at his foot with sincere repentance: Thus he says, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*^d; and, how vile soever they have been, their unworthiness shall not be a bar to hinder his acceptance of them.

(3.) He also shews them their obligations to obey and submit to him, as their rightful Lord and Sovereign, who claims divine *worship* from them^e, and what unanswerable engagements they are laid under hereunto, from all that he did and suffer'd in life and death, whereby he not

only express'd the highest love, but purchased to himself a peculiar people, who must own him as their King, if they expect to reap the blessed fruits and effects of his purchase, as a Priest: This Christ convinces them of. And,

(4.) He represents to them the vast advantages that will attend their subjection to his government, as they shall not only obtain a full and free pardon of all their past crimes, and be taken into favour as much as though they had never forfeited it, but he will confer on them all those graces that accompany salvation, and advance them to the highest honour; upon which account they are said to be made *kings and priests to God*^f; yea, he will grant them *to sit with him in his throne*^g; not as sharing any part of his mediatorial glory, but as being near to him that sits on the throne, and having all those tokens of his regard to them that are agreeable to their condition, or the relation they stand in to him, as subjects. He presents to their view all the promises of the covenant of grace, which are in his hand, to accomplish, and gives them ground to expect all the blessings he hath purchased, assures them that he will admit them to the most delightful and intimate communion with himself here; that he *will keep them from falling*, and, in the end, *present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*^h; and as for all their past follies, ingratitude, and rebellion against him, he tells them, that these shall be passed over, and *not laid to their charge*ⁱ; for their confusion and condemnation, how expedient soever it may be for him to bring them to their remembrance, to humble them, and enhance their love and gratitude to him, who will, notwithstanding, forgive them.

(5.) He gives them to understand what duties he expects from them, and what are the laws that all his subjects are obliged to obey, and accordingly that he will not give forth any dispensation or allowance to sin, which is a returning again to folly; neither will he suffer them to make their own will the rule of their actions; or to live as they list, nor to give way to carnal security, negligence, or indifference, in his service, but they must be always pressing forwards, running the race he has set before them with diligence and industry, that they *be not slothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and*

^a Luke xiii. 3.

^b Job ix. 4.

^c Luke xix. 27.

^d John vi. 37.

^e Psal. xlv. 11.

^f Rev. i. 6.

^g Rev. iii. 21.

^h Jude, ver. 24.

ⁱ Rom. viii. 33.

patience,

456 Other Means used to bring Subjects into CHRIST's Kingdom.

patience, inherit the promises^b; and not only so, but *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord^c*; that they must have a zeal for his honour, as those that appear to be in good earnest, and prefer his interest to their own; and that this must be temper'd with meekness, lest, whilst they seem to be espousing his cause, they give ground to conclude that the indulging their irregular passions is what they principally design. As for the obedience he demands of them, it must be universal, with their whole heart, and to the utmost of their power; and therefore if the duty enjoin'd be difficult, they must not say, as some of his followers did, *This is an hard saying, who can bear it^d?* but rather, in this case, depend on his grace for strength to enable them to perform it; and, as they are to obey his commanding will, so he tells them they must submit to his providential will, and therein glorify his sovereignty, and reckon every thing good that he does, inasmuch as it proceeds from a wise and gracious hand, and is render'd subservient to answer the best ends, for his glory and their advantage.

Moreover, he tells them, that whatever obedience they may be enabled to perform, they must ascribe the glory thereof not to themselves, but to him, as he is the Author and Finisher of faith, and works in them all those graces that he requires of them. And, when they have thus engaged in his service, and their faces are turn'd heaven-ward, he obliges them never to think of returning to their former state and company, or subject themselves to the tyranny they are deliver'd from: As the angel order'd *Lot*, when he was escaped out of *Sodom*, not so much as to look back, as one that had a hankering mind to what he had left behind him; or like the *Israelites*, who long'd for the onions and garlick, and the flesh pots of *Egypt*, when they were on their journey towards the good land, which God had promised them. Thus Christ expects that all his subjects should not only obey him, but that they should do this with unfainting perseverance, as *not being of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul^e*. Thus concerning their present obligations and future advantages, together with the duties they are engaged to perform; or the laws of Christ's kingdom, which he makes known to them,

before they are brought into subjection to him.

And to this we may add, that he not only presents to them the bright, but the dark side of the cloud, and sets before them the many difficulties and troubles they are like to meet with in this world, in common with the rest of his subjects, that they may not hereafter be under any temptation, to complain as though they were disappointed, when things go otherwise than they were given to expect: As with one hand he represents to their view the crown of life; so, with the other, he holds forth *the cross, which they must take up, and follow him^f*, if they would be his disciples. He does not conceal from them the evils they are like to meet with from the world, but tells them plainly, that they must expect to be *hated of all men for his name sake^g*, and be willing to part with all things for him, especially if standing in competition with him; so that *he who loveth father or mother, son or daughter, yea, his own life, more than him, is not worthy of him^h*; and, that self-denial must be their daily exercise, that no idol of jealousy must be set up in their hearts; no secret or darling lust indulged, as being not only contrary to the temper and disposition of his subjects, and a dishonour to their character, but inconsistent with that supream love that is due to him alone: He also warns them not to hold any confederacy with his enemies, strictly forbids them to make any covenant with death and hell, and requires, that all former covenants therewith should be disannul'd and broken, as containing a tacit denial of their allegiance to him.

Thus concerning the methods which Christ useth, in an objective way, to bring his people into his kingdom. But these are not regarded by the greatest part of those that sit under the sound of the gospel; nor, indeed, are they effectual to answer this end in any, till he is pleased to incline and enable them, by his power, to submit to him; he must first conquer them before they will obey. Before this they had no more than an external overture, or representation of things, in which he dealt with them as intelligent creatures, in order to their becoming his subjects out of choice, as having the strongest motives and inducements thereunto: But this is an internal work upon the heart, whereby every thing, that hinder'd their com-

^b Heb. vi. 12.

^c Rom. xii. 11.

^d John vi. 60.

^e Heb. x. 39.

^f Matt. xvi. 24.

^g Mat. x. 22.

^h Ver. 37. compared with Luke xiv. 26.

pliance,

How Subjection to CHRIST's Government is first express'd. 457

pliance is removed, and they are drawn by that power, without which *none can come unto him*¹; their hearts are broken, their wills renew'd, and all the powers and faculties of their souls inclined to subscribe to his government, as King of saints. This leads us to consider,

3. How persons first express their willingness to be Christ's subjects; what engagements they lay themselves under, and what course they take pursuant thereunto.

(1.) They cast themselves at his feet with the greatest humility and reverence, being sensible of their own vileness and ingratitude, and, at the same time, are greatly affected with his clemency and grace, who, notwithstanding their unworthiness, invites them to come to him, which they do, not as desiring to capitulate, or stand upon terms with him, but they are willing that he should make his own terms, like one that sends a blank paper to his victorious prince, that he might write upon it what he pleases, and expresses his willingness to subscribe it. This may be illustrated by the manner in which *Benhadad's* servants, when his army was entirely ruin'd, and he no longer able to make resistance against *Abah*, present themselves before him with *sackcloth on their loins, and ropes on their heads*, in token of the greatest humility, together with an implicit acknowledgment of what they had deserved; and without the usual method of entering into treaties of peace, the only message they were to deliver was, *Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live*^k: Thus the humble returning sinner implores forgiveness, and a right to his life, as an act of grace, at the hand of Christ, who has been represented to him, in the gospel, as a merciful King, and ready to receive returning sinners.

(2.) This subjection to Christ is attended with the greatest love to and desire after him, which they express to his Person and his service, as well as those rewards that attend it, being constrained hereunto by that love and compassion, which he hath shewed to them, and by those just *Ideas* which they are now brought to entertain, concerning every thing that belongs to his kingdom and interest.

(3.) They consent to be the Lord's, by a solemn act of self-dedication, or surrender of themselves, and all that they have, to him, as seeing themselves obli-

ged so to do; and therefore they desire to be his, to all intents and purposes, his entirely, and for ever.

(4.) Since there are many difficult duties incumbent on Christ's subjects, and many blessings which they hope to receive, they express their entire dependence on him for grace, to enable them to behave themselves agreeably to the obligations they are under, that they may not turn aside from him, or deal treacherously with him, as being unsteadfast in his covenant: They also rely on his faithfulness for the accomplishment of all the promises, which afford matter of relief and encouragement to them; and this is accompanied with a fix'd purpose, or resolution, to wait on him, in all his ordinances, as means appointed by him, in which they hope to obtain those blessings they stand in need of.

(5.) This is done with a solemn withdrawing themselves from, renouncing and testifying their abhorrence of those to whom they have formerly been in subjection, whose interest is contrary to, and subversive of Christ's government. These they count to be their greatest, yea, their only enemies, and proclaim open war against them, and that with a fixed resolution, by the grace of God, to pursue it to the utmost; like the courageous soldier, who, having drawn his sword, throws away the scabbard, as one that will not leave off fighting till he has gain'd a compleat victory; and this resolution is increased by that hatred which he entertains against sin, and is exercised in proportion to it: The enemies against whom he engages are the world, the flesh, and the devil; the motives that induce him thereunto are because they are enemies to Christ, and stand in the way of his salvation. Now, that he might manage this warfare with success, he takes to himself *the whole armour of God*, which the Apostle describes¹, which is both offensive and defensive. And he also considers himself, as obliged to shun all treaties or proposals made by them, to turn him aside from Christ, and all correspondence with them, and to avoid every thing that may prove a snare or temptation to him, or tend to Christ's dishonour.

And to this we may add, that he hath a due sense of his obligation, to endeavour to deliver others from their servitude to sin and Satan, to encourage those who are almost perswaded to submit to Christ, and to strengthen the hands of

¹ John vi. 44.

^k 1 Kings xv. 32.

¹ Eph. vi. 11—17.

458 *The Behaviour of CHRIST's Subjects; their daily Conflicts.*

those who are already enter'd into his service, engaged with him in the same warfare against his enemies, and pursuing the same design, conducive to his glory. The methods he takes, in order hereunto, are truly warrantable, and becoming the servants of Christ: He is not like the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who were very zealous to gain Proselytes to their interest, which, when they had done, *they made them twofold more the children of hell than themselves*^m; but makes it his business to convince those whom he converses with, that they are subject to the greatest tyranny of those who intend nothing but their ruin; that they serve them who have no right to their service, and, that the only way to obtain liberty, is to enter into Christ's service, and then they will be *free indeed*ⁿ. Moreover, he endeavours to remove those prejudices, and answer all objections which Satan usually brings, or furnishes his subjects with, against Christ and his government. If they say, with the daughters of *Jerusalem*, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* He has many things to say in his commendation; as, the church is brought in using various metaphorical expressions to set forth his glory, and he joins with them in that comprehensive character given of him, which contains the sum of all that words can express, *He is altogether lovely; this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem*^o: Thus concerning the way in which Christ's subjects engage against and oppose Satan's kingdom.

But let it be farther consider'd, that the opposition is mutual: when persons are deliver'd out of the power of darkness, and translated into Christ's kingdom, they are not to expect to be wholly free from the assaults of their spiritual enemies, and these oftentimes gain great advantages against them from the remainders of corrupt nature, in the best of men. The devil is represented, by the Apostle, *as a roaring lion, who walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*^p. Sometimes he gives disturbance to Christ's subjects, by inclining men to exercise their persecuting rage and fury against the church, designing hereby to work upon their fear; at other times, he endeavours, as it were, by methods of bribery, to engage unstable persons in his interest, by the overture of secular advantage; or else to discourage some, by pretending that

religion is a melancholy thing, that they who embrace it are like to strive against the stream, and meet with nothing but what will make them uneasy in the world. This opposition, which is directed against Christ's kingdom, proves oftentimes very discouraging to his subjects; but there are attempts of another nature often used to amuse, discourage, and destroy their peace, by taxing them with hypocrisy, and pretending, that all their hope of an interest in Christ's favour and protection, is but a delusion, and therefore it had been better for them not to have given in their names to him, since the only consequence thereof will be the enhancing their condemnation. If the providences of God be dark and afflictive, he endeavours to suggest to them hard thoughts of Christ, and to make them question his goodness and faithfulness, and to say, with the Psalmist, *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and have washed my hands in innocency*^q; and, when God is pleased, at any time, for wise ends, to deny them his comforting presence, the enemy is ready, on this occasion, to persuade them, as the Psalmist represents some speaking to the like purpose, that *there is no help for them in God*^r.

These methods are often used, by the enemies of Christ's kingdom, to weaken the hands of his subjects, whereby the exercise of their graces is oftentimes interrupted, and they are hurried into many sins, through the violence of temptation; nevertheless, they shall not wholly revolt. Grace may be foil'd, and weaken'd thereby, but it shall not be utterly extinguished; for, though they be guilty of many failures and miscarriages, which discover them to be in an imperfect state, yet they are preserved from relapsing into their former state; and not only so, but are often enabled to prevail against their spiritual enemies, in which the concern of Christ, for their good, eminently discovers it self; and, if the advantage gained against them be occasion'd by their going in the way of temptation, or not being on their guard, or using those means that might prevent their being overcome thereby, this is over-ruled by Christ, to the humbling and making them more watchful for the future; or if God has left them to themselves, that he may shew them the sin and folly of their self-confidence, or reliance on their own strength, this shall be a means to induce them to

^m Matt. xxiii. 15.
^r Psal. iii. 2.

ⁿ John viii. 36.

^o Cant. v. 9, 16.

^p 1 Pet. v. 8.

^q Psal. lxxiii. 13.

be more dependent on him for the future, as well as importunate with him, by faith and prayer, for that grace, which is sufficient to prevent their total and final apostacy, as well as to recover them from their present back-slidings. And these many weaknesses and defects, which give them so much uneasiness, will induce them to sympathize with others in the like condition; and the various methods which Christ takes for their recovery, will render them skilful in directing others how to escape, or disentangle themselves, from this snare, in which they have been taken, and which has given them so much uneasiness.

We might here have enlarged on that particular branch of this subject, which respects the warfare that is to be carried on by every one who lifts himself under Christ's banner, and owns him to be his rightful Lord and Sovereign, which takes up a very considerable part of the Christian life; as he is said *to wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places*^f; and elsewhere we read of *the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*^g: But this will be consider'd under a following *Answer*, in which we shall be led to speak of the imperfection of sanctification in believers, together with the reasons thereof^h; and therefore we pass it over at present, and shall proceed to consider,

4. How Christ deals with his subjects after he has brought them hitherto, and inclined and enabled them to submit to his government: This is express'd in the *Answer* we are explaining, in the following *Heads*.

(1.) He rewards their obedience. This supposes that he requires that they should obey him, and that their obedience should be constant and universal, otherwise they deserve not the character of subjects; and, as to what concerns the regard of Christ to this obedience, though herein men are not profitable to God, as they are to themselves, or to one another, yet it shall not go unrewarded. The blessings which Christ confers on them are sometimes stiled a reward, inasmuch as there is a certain connection between their duty and interest, or their obeying and being made blessed, which blessedness is properly the reward of what Christ has done,

though his people esteem it as an act of the highest favour; in this sense he rewards their obedience, and that either by increasing their graces, and establishing their comforts here; or by bringing them to perfection hereafter. But inasmuch as their obedience is, at present, very imperfect, which tends very much to their reproach, and affords matter of daily humiliation before God, it is farther added,

(2.) That Christ corrects them for their sins. This is inserted among the advantages of his government, though it is certain, that afflictions, absolutely consider'd, are not to be desired; nevertheless, since they are sometimes *needful*^x, and conducive to our spiritual advantage, they are included in this gracious dispensation, which attends Christ's government, as *by these things men live*^y. How much soever nature dreads them, yet Christ's people consider them as designed for their good, and therefore not only submit to them, but conclude that herein he deals well with them. As we are far from blaming the skilful chirurgeon, who sets a bone that is out of joint, or cuts off a limb, when it is necessary to save our lives, though neither of these can be done without great pain: Thus when God visits our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes, we reckon that he deals with us as a merciful and gracious Sovereign, and not as an enemy, since his design is to heal our back-slidings, and prevent a worse evil from ensuing thereby.

(3.) He preserves and supports his subjects under all their temptations and sufferings. There are two sorts of temptations mention'd in scripture, to wit, such as are merely providential, which are design'd as trials of faith and patience; as when the Apostle says, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience*^z; and elsewhere the Apostle Paul, speaking of the persecutions which he met with from the Jews, calls them *temptations*^a. But, besides these, there are other temptations which arise from sin, Satan, and the world, whereby endeavours are used more directly to draw Christ's subjects from their allegiance to him: Thus 'tis said, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*^b; and elsewhere, *They that will be rich, that is, who take indirect means to attain that end, or make this*

^f Eph. vi. 12.
^g James i. 2, 3.

^h Gal. v. 17.
^a Acts xx. 19.

^u See Quest. LXXVIII.
^b James i. 14.

^x 1 Pet. i. 6.

^y Isai. xxxviii. 16.

460 Of CHRIST's Kingly Office, as respecting his Enemies.

the grand design of life, *fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition*^c; and the devil, who has a great hand in managing these temptations, and solicits us to comply therewith, is, for that reason, called, by way of eminency, *the tempter*^d. In both these respects, believers are exposed to great danger, by reason of temptations, and need either to be preserved from, or supported under them, that they may not prove their ruin; and this Christ does in managing the affairs of his kingdom of grace for his people's advantage, and herein that promise is fulfilled to them, *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*^e.

(4.) Christ powerfully orders all things for his own glory, and his people's good, as they are said to *work together for good*^f, and herein his wisdom, as well as his goodness, is illustrated. Sometimes, indeed, they cannot see from the beginning of an afflictive providence to the end thereof, or what advantage God designs thereby; herein we may apply those words of our Saviour to *Peter*, though spoken with another view, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*^g. This will eminently appear, when they shall see how every step which Christ has taken in the management of his government, has had a subserviency to promote their spiritual advantage here, and their everlasting salvation hereafter. Thus we have consider'd how Christ executes his kingly office, more especially towards his people, who are his faithful subjects.

Secondly, We are now to speak concerning the exercise of Christ's kingly government towards his enemies. He is, as has been before observ'd, their King; not by consent, or voluntary subjection to him, nor do they desire to own his authority, or yield obedience to his laws; but they are, notwithstanding, to be reckon'd the subjects of his government; which is exercised,

1. In setting bounds to their power and malice, so that they cannot do what they would against his cause and interest in the world. How far soever he may suffer them to proceed to the disadvantage of his people; yet he is able to crush them

in a moment; and, when he sees their rage, and how they set themselves against him with their combin'd force and insult, as though they had brought their designs to bear, as not doubting the success thereof, he tells them plainly, that *they imagine a vain thing*, and that *he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision*^h; and the reason is very obvious, because God is greater than man. Though it would be a dishonour to him to say, that he is the author of sin, yet it redounds to his glory, that he sets bounds and limits to it, and overrules it by his wisdom to his own glory; as it is said, *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*ⁱ.

2. Christ has exercised his kingly government in gaining a victory over his enemies; this he did, when *he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross*. This, indeed, was done by him, when he was in the lowest depths of his sufferings, and, in a more eminent degree, exercised his priestly office; yet, in some respects, he is said, at that time, to have exercised his kingly, and that in a very triumphant manner, as it is here express'd; and elsewhere he is said, *through death, to have destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*^k; hereby he purchased those restraints which the powers of darkness were brought under more than they were before. Satan's chain was hereby shorten'd, and his subjects deliver'd out of his hand, being ransomed by the blood of Christ; and, as the consequence thereof, they were afterwards perswaded to withdraw their necks from that yoke, which they were formerly under, by the power of that grace that attended the preaching of the gospel, whereby they were subjected to Christ's government. Moreover, our Saviour tells his people, that he had *overcome the world*^l; not only because he had, in his own Person, escaped the pollution thereof, and not been entangled in its snares, nor hinder'd in the work he was engaged in, by the afflictions and injurious treatment that he met with from it; but as he has procur'd for them those victories over it, whereby they shall be made *more than conquerors through him that loved them*.

3. Christ's kingly government is, and shall more eminently appear to be exer-

^c 1 Tim. vi. 9.
^e John xiii. 7.

^d 1 Thess. iii. 5. and Matt. iv. 3.
^h Psal. ii. 1, 4.

ⁱ Psal. lxxvi. 10.

^f 1 Cor. x. 13.
^k Heb. ii. 14.

^g Rom. viii. 28.
^l John xvi. 33.

CHRIST govern'd his Church before and since his Incarnation. 46 i

cised towards his enemies, in punishing them for all their rebellions against him; there are reserves of vengeance laid up in store, and more vials of wrath, which shall be poured forth on Satan, and all the powers of darkness, which they are not without some terrible apprehensions of, from the knowledge they have of God, as a just judge; upon which account they are said to *believe and tremble*^m; and as for all his other enemies, he will *break them with a rod of iron; he will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*ⁿ, or bring them forth, and slay them before him^o. Thus concerning the manner how Christ's kingly government hath been exercised, both towards his people and his enemies; and this leads us to consider,

III. The various seasons, or ages, in which Christ's kingly government has been, or shall be exercised, together with the different circumstances relating to the administration of it therein. As soon as ever man fell, and thereby stood in need of a mediator to recover him, Christ was reveal'd, as one who had undertaken his recovery, and, as a victorious King, who should break and destroy that power, that had brought him into subjection to it. Now there are various periods, or seasons, in which he has executed his kingly office, or shall continue so to do.

1. He did this before his incarnation, during which time his government was visible, as to the effects thereof, as extended to all those who were saved under the Old Testament-dispensation: They were subdued and defended by his divine power, that was then exerted, as well as discharged, from condemnation, by virtue of the sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, he was to offer for them. We have already shewed how he executed his prophetic office during this interval^p; now we must consider him as exercising his kingly office. The majestick way in which he deliver'd the law from mount Sinai, was a glorious display thereof; and the *Theocracy*, which they were under, which is described, in scripture, as a government distinct from, and excelling all others in glory, and the subserviency of it to their salvation, was a farther evidence that he was their King. This he evinced, at one time, by his appearance to Joshua, as the *Captain of the Lord's hosts*; and at another time it was represented in an emblematical way, when he

was seen by the prophet *Isaiab*, as *sitting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple*. And, in the book of *Psalms*, he is frequently acknowledged by the church as their *King*; concerning whom 'tis said, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre*^q; and, in many other places, he is described as *the King, the Lord of hosts*, not only as predicting the future exercise of his government, but as denoting what he was at that time; concerning whom it was said, *Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?*^r And when God declares that he had advanced him to this mediatorial dignity, and *set him on his holy hill of Zion, the kings and judges of the earth* are exhorted to *serve him with fear*, and, in token of their willingness, to be his subjects, *to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little*^s.

2. After his incarnation, when he first came into the world, he was publickly owned, by the wise men (who came from the east) as one that *was born King of the Jews*, and the gifts which they presented to him of gold, frankincense, and myrrh^t, the best presents that their country afforded, were designed to signify that homage which was due to him, as one whom God had appointed to be the King of his church, though his external mien, and the circumstances of his birth, contain'd no visible marks of regal dignity. While he convers'd with his people, in the exercise of his publick ministry, he gave them frequent intimations hereof, when describing the nature of his kingdom, as spiritual, and not of this world; and, when one of his followers address'd him, as *the Son of God, and the King of Israel*, he is so far from reproving him, as ascribing to him a glory that did not belong to him, that he not only commends his faith that was express'd herein, but gives him to understand, that he should have a greater evidence of this truth, when *he should see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon him*^u.

And, in the close of his life, when he enter'd into *Jerusalem*, with a design to give himself up to the rage and fury of his enemies, providence, as it were, extorted a confession of his regal dignity; from the unstable multitude, and, at the same time, designed to fulfil what was foretold by the prophet *Zechariah*, when he says,

^m James ii. 19.

ⁿ Psal. ii. 9.

^o Luke xix. 27.

^p See Pag. 415.

^q Psal. xlv. 6.

^r Jer.

viii. 19.

^s Psal. ii. 6, 10, 12.

^t Matt. ii. 2. compared with *Ver.* 11.

^u John i. 49-51.

462 CHRIST executes his Kingly Office in his glorified State.

Rejoyce greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass^x; and their saying, *Hosannah, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord^y*, was the result of a present conviction, which they had of this matter, though it was not long abiding, and hereby they were, as it were, condemn'd out of their own mouths. And, after this, when Pilate ask'd him this question, in plain terms, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* he publicly professes himself to be so; nevertheless, he gives him to understand, that his kingdom was not of this world; upon this account, the Apostle says, that before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession, and styles him, *King of kings, and Lord of lords^z*.

3. Christ still executes his kingly office in that glorified state, in which he now is. This the Apostle intimates, when alluding to the custom of kings in their solemn triumphs over their enemies, (who throw medals amongst the people to perpetuate the remembrance thereof, and bestow donatives, or peculiar marks of favour upon this occasion) when he speaks of him, as *ascending up on high, having led captivity captive, and then giving gifts unto men^a*. In this exalted state, there are undeniable proofs of his regal dignity in the blessings which his church, in this world, receives, as the result of it, as well as in the honours that are paid him by the inhabitants of heaven. The Socinians, indeed, will not allow that he executed his kingly office on earth: But this is contrary to the account we have of his executing it in his humbled state, as above mention'd; therefore we must suppose that, when Christ enter'd into his glory, he did not begin to reign; though, from that time, he has exercised his government in a different manner, upon the account whereof the gospel-dispensation, which ensued thereon, is called, by way of eminence, *his kingdom*; and, because this dispensation began upon his ascension into heaven, it is sometimes called, in the New Testament, *the kingdom of heaven*.

I need not add much concerning the present exercise of his kingly government, since the greatest part of what has been said, under this *Answer*, has a particular regard to it. It was after his ascension into heaven that the gospel-church was established, which is sometimes called his

visible kingdom; then it was that the laws and ordinances, by which it was to be govern'd; were made known to it, together with the peculiar privileges that were then bestowed upon it, as the effects of Christ's royal bounty: Then the Spirit was sent, and, by his assistance, the gospel was preached to all nations, saving grace plentifully bestowed on multitudes, who were enabled to subject themselves to him, as King of saints; and, in this manner, Christ has hitherto exercised his kingly government, and will do until his second coming.

Here we shall take occasion to consider what is advanced, by several, concerning Christ's reigning *a thousand years* on earth, which, they suppose, will intervene between the present administration of the affairs of his kingdom, and the saints reigning with him in heaven for ever. This opinion has not only the countenance of many ancient writers, who have defended it, but it seems to be founded on several scriptures; so that we shall be led, in considering this subject, rather to enquire into the true sense of those scriptures, that speak of Christ's reigning on earth, than to deny that he will, in any sense, reign therein, in a way circumstantially different from that in which he now administers the affairs of his kingdom. And here we shall consider what is advanced, by some, concerning this matter, who assert many things relating thereunto, which stand in need of stronger arguments to defend them, than have hitherto been brought; and then we shall consider how far we have ground, from scripture, to say, that Christ shall reign here on earth, and all his saints that shall live therein, with him, and what we may conclude to be the true sense of those scriptures that are brought in defence of Christ's personal reign.

The opinions of those that treat on this subject, are so different, that to speak distinctly to them all, would be too great a diversion from my general design; and this also renders it more difficult to lay down the state of the question in a few words. However, I shall briefly attempt this; and, that we may proceed with greater clearness, shall consider what is asserted, by several writers, concerning Christ's personal reign on earth, which shall be in the latter end of the world, and is to continue, from the time that it commences, a thousand years.

^x Zech. ix. 9.

^y John xii. 13.

^z 1 Tim. vi. 13, 15.

^a Eph. iv. 8.

(1.) Some

Various Opinions about CHRIST'S Thousand Years-Reign. 463

(1.) Some have supposed, that this *thousand years-reign* includes in it the whole compass of time, in which Christ shall judge the world. This is called, indeed, in scripture, *a day*; but it cannot reasonably be supposed that it shall take up no more than the space of twenty four hours; and therefore these suppose, that it shall contain the space of *a thousand years*, which they found partly on that scripture, in *Psal. xc. 4. A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past*; and more especially on the Apostle's words, in *2 Pet. iii. 8. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*; and this they apply, in particular, to the day of judgment, which is spoken of in the *Verse* immediately foregoing; and, since we have ground to conclude that this shall be done on earth, and also, that, when Christ judges the world, it may be truly said, he exercises his kingly office in a most glorious manner; therefore they conclude, from hence, that this thousand years-reign includes in it all the time that he will take up in judging the world: But, even in this matter, all do not agree in their sentiments; for some think, that, in this judicial process, none are to be judged but the saints, who, being acquitted by him, are said to reign with him; and, in order, hereunto, that they shall be raised from the dead, which they suppose to be meant by the *first resurrection*, and that the rest shall not be raised till the thousand years are finished^b. But this seems not agreeable to the account we have elsewhere, in scripture, of Christ's raising the dead, coming to judgment, and determining the state, both of the righteous and wicked, as what is to be done in or near the same time, each of these being distinct branches of the same solemnity. And that which makes this opinion still more improbable, is, because, in the same scripture in which we have an account of this thousand years-reign, it immediately follows, that, when these years shall be expired, *Satan* will be loosed out of his prison, and suffered to deceive the nations, and then we read of other enemies which the church shall have, concerning whom 'tis said, that *they shall be gathered together to battle*; and 'tis farther said, that they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and all this is said to be done between the end of the thousand years-reign

^b Rev. xx. 5.

and the general judgment, when *the dead, small and great, shall be raised, the books opened, and all judged out of those things that are written therein, according to their works*; therefore this opinion, concerning the thousand years-reign, including in it the time in which Christ shall appear, in this lower world, to judge his saints, does not seem to be the sense of that scripture on which this opinion is supposed to be founded^c.

(2.) The more common opinion, which is defended by several ancient and modern *Chiliassts*, or *Millenaries*, as they are generally called, is, that our Lord Jesus Christ shall, some time in the last days, before he comes to the final judgment, appear in this lower world, in his human nature, and dwell and reign among the inhabitants thereof, in such a way, as may render it a kind of middle state between that which the church is now in, and heaven, more glorious than the former, and yet very much inferior to the latter. And here they suppose,

1st. That there are several things which shall go immediately before it, as tending to usher in the glory of that kingdom, to wit, the conversion of the *Jews*, which is to be effected at once. And, in order hereunto, some conclude, that the dispensation of miracles shall be revived, which they argue from hence, in that all the remarkable changes that have formerly been made in the affairs of the church, have been introduced by miracles; and the *Jews*, more than any other nation in the world, have been desirous of a conviction by such a method as this.

Moreover, it is also supposed, that, at the same time, those scriptures that foretell a greater fulness of the *Gentiles*, or the conversion of many, who still remain in the darkness of Heathenism, shall have their accomplishment in an eminent degree; and this shall also proceed from, and be attended with a greater degree of the effusion of the Spirit, and the consequence hereof will be a more glorious light shining throughout the world, than has ever done; and that these two, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, shall be both joined together, in one body, under Christ, their visible and glorious Head.

Moreover, some suppose, that *Jerusalem*, and the countries round about it, shall be the principal seat of this kingdom, to which these new converts shall repair, so that, as there the glorious scene of the gospel was first opened, in that part

^c See Chap. xx. 12.

464 *Some Things supposed to precede or attend the Millennium.*

of the earth, the glory of Christ's personal reign shall begin. Others, to this, add, that, at this time, the temple at *Jerusalem* shall be built, which shall far exceed that that was built by *Solomon*, in glory; and that the *New Jerusalem* shall be also built and adorn'd in a magnificent way, agreeable to what is said of it in scripture^d, which they understand in a literal sense. In this I must take leave to differ from them, though not in what was but now hinted, concerning the conversion of the *Jews*. and the fullness of the *Gentiles* going before it.

2^{dly}. Tho' some suppose that the general conflagration, spoken of by the Apostle *Peter*^e, shall be after this thousand years-reign, which is certainly the more probable opinion; yet others have concluded, that it shall be before it, and that *the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*, which believers, according to God's promise, look for, shall arise out of the ruins of the old. Thus a late writer says^f, who advances many things concerning the ante-diluvian world, as well as this new one, with an elegance of stile, that is very entertaining, and, in many instances, runs counter to the sentiments of all that went before him, than which a more ingenious romance is hardly extant: But since, for the most part, he brings in scripture to give countenance to what he advances, and lays down a peculiar scheme concerning this *Millennium*, I cannot wholly pass it over. He supposes, that the reign of Christ, on earth, shall be usher'd in by a general conflagration, in which all the inhabitants thereof must necessarily be consumed, and the world reduced into a second chaos by fire; and, as his master *Des Cartes* describes the form of the world, when first created, and how the various particles of matter were disposed, in order to its being brought to that perfection to which it arrived afterwards, so he describes the form to which the world shall be reduced by this conflagration, out of which the new world shall be framed; which, when done, being at a loss to find out inhabitants for it, he supposes that the dead shall be raised; to which, he applies what is said, in scripture, concerning the *first resurrection*, and then this thousand years-reign begins: But he is much more at a loss, as might easily be supposed, to account for *Gog and Magog*, the enemies of the church, which shall give it great

disturbance at the close thereof; and, since he cannot easily suppose them to be raised from the dead for this end, he fancies that they shall spring out of the earth; which so much embarrasses his scheme, that, whatsoever scriptures he brings in defence of it, it must be supposed, by impartial judges, to be attended with the greatest absurdities.

3^{dly}. There are others who suppose, that the general conflagration shall not be till the end of the thousand years-reign; nevertheless they conclude, that the dead shall be raised, and more particularly those who are designed to reign with Christ. And, with respect to this, the sentiments of persons are somewhat different, inasmuch as some suppose that none shall be raised, at this time, but those who have suffer'd martyrdom for Christ's sake; and that this is the meaning of that expression, *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God, and they lived and reigned a thousand years*^g. Others suppose, that because many, who have not suffer'd death for Christ's sake, have, in other respects, pass'd through an equal number of persecutions and reproaches in life, and were ready to suffer martyrdom, had they been called to it, these are not excluded; and therefore that all the saints shall be raised from the dead, as the Apostle says, *The dead in Christ shall rise first*^h, that is, a thousand years before the wicked, and that this is intended by what is stiled the *first resurrection*; they shall rise not to be received immediately into heaven, but shall be first openly acknowledged, and acquitted by Christ, the Judge of all, and then reign with him on earth, throughout this whole period of time.

4^{thly}. Others suppose, that, during this thousand years-reign, the publick ordinances of God's worship, namely, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, and the present order and discipline of churches, shall entirely cease, to which they accommodate the sense of some scriptures, to wit, that in which it is said, concerning the *New Jerusalem*, that *there was no temple therein, that the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it*ⁱ; and elsewhere, when the Apostle says, that the church, in celebrating the Lord's Supper, was to *shew the Lord's death, till he come*^k. They suppose that the meaning is, that they were to do this till he

^d See Rev. xxi. iv. 16.

^e 2 Pet. iii. 7, 13.

^f Vid Burnet. Tellur. Theor. Lib. IV.

^g Rev. xx. 4.

^h 1 Thess.

ⁱ Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

^k 1 Cor. xi. 26.

shall come to reign upon earth, and no longer.

5^{thly}. There are some who entertain very carnal notions of the saints reigning with Christ, inconsistent with perfect holiness; and speak of pleasures, which they shall then enjoy, that are more agreeable to *Mahomet's* paradise, than to the life of saints admitted to such privileges, which they suppose them to be partakers of. And some proceed yet farther in their wild and ungrounded fancies, when they think that a small number of the wicked shall be left in the world, to be, as it were, slaves to them; all which are inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. Such extreams as these, many, who have defended Christ's personal reign on earth, have unwarily run into; among whom there are some ancient writers, who have led the way to others, who speak of it, as the generally received opinion of the Fathers in the three first Centuries¹; but these are not much to be depended on, as to the sense they give of scripture, any more than those who have lived in later ages, especially in those things which they advance, that seem to be inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom: But, if this account, which they give of it, appear to be contrary thereunto, what they farther say concerning it, and others, who improve upon their scheme, is much more remote from it, when they speak of the building of *Jerusalem*, and that being the principal seat of Christ's reign; and of several things relating to it, which are of such a nature, and contain so great a reproach on Christ's kingdom, that I forbear to mention them, and there are very few who will think them consistent with the character of saints. This gave disgust to *Augustin*, who, at first, adhered

to this opinion, but afterwards was justly prejudiced against it^m.

Thus we have given a brief account of the different sentiments of many, who treat in their writings of Christ's personal reign, of which some are maintained by persons of great worth and judgment, and seem more agreeable to the sense of those scriptures, that are brought to defend them, than others; these ought to be farther consider'd, that it may appear whether they are just, or no. As for those, which can hardly be called any other than romantick, and have little more to support them, than the ungrounded conjectures of those who advance them, and are so far from agreeing with the general scope and design of scripture, that they contain a reflection on the methods of Christ's government, rather than an expedient to advance it. These carry in themselves their own confutation, and nothing farther need be said in opposition to them.

Before we proceed to consider how far Christ's reign on earth may be defended, and in what other respects several things, which are asserted, relating to some circumstances that, they suppose, will attend it, do not seem to be sufficiently founded on scripture, we shall take leave to premise some things, in general, relating to the method in which this subject ought to be managed.

1. So far as scripture plainly gives countenance to this doctrine in general, viz. that the administration of Christ's government, in this lower world, shall be attended with great glory, and shall abundantly tend to the advantage of his church, this is a subject of too great importance to be pass'd over with neglect, as though we had no manner of

¹ *Justin Martyr* seems to speak of it not only as his own opinion, but as that which was generally held by the orthodox in his day, joins the belief hereof with that of the resurrection of the dead, and supposes it to be founded on the writings of some of the prophets. *Vid. Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. Jud. Pag. 307.* Ἐγὼ δὲ, καὶ εἰ τινὲς εἰσὶν ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα Χριστιανοὶ, καὶ σαρκὸς ἀνάσσειν ἡμῶν ἐπιστάμεθα, καὶ χίλια ἔτη ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ οἰκοδομηθείσῃ καὶ κοσμηθείσῃ καὶ πλατυνθείσῃ, οἱ περὶ ἡμᾶς Ἰεζεκιήλ, καὶ Ησαΐας, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ὁμολογοῦσιν; and *Irenaeus* [*Vid. advers. Hær. Lib. V. cap. 33.*] not only gives into this opinion, but intimates, that it was brought into the church before his time, by one *Papias*, contemporary with *Polycarp*, and that he received it from those who had it imparted to them by the Apostle *John*: But *Eusebius*, [*Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. III. cap. 33.*] tho' he speaks concerning this *Papias*, as one who was intimate with *Polycarp*, notwithstanding he represents him as a very weak man; and therefore there is little credit to be given to his account of this matter, as agreeable to the Apostle's sentiments or writings; and *Irenaeus* himself, in the place before mentioned, cites a passage out of the same author, which, he pretends, he received from those that had it from the Apostle *John*, concerning a certain time, in which there shall be vines, which will produce ten thousand branches, and each of these as many smaller branches; and each of these small branches have ten thousand twigs, and every twig shall bear ten thousand clusters of grapes, and every cluster ten thousand grapes, which shews that the man was ready to swallow any fable he heard; and, if it was told him so, to father it upon the Apostle, which discovers how little credit was to be given to what he says concerning this opinion, especially as he explains it, as transmitted to the church by the Apostle *John*. And *Tertullian* is also mentioned, as giving some occasional hints, which shew that he was of this opinion. And *Lactantius*, who, in his *Ciceronian* style, describes the happy condition that the church shall be in, (without having much regard to those spiritual privileges that it shall enjoy, in which sense the predictions of the prophets, concerning it, are principally to be understood) takes his plan more especially from some things that are said concerning it, in the *Sybilline* oracles. *Vid. Lactant. de vitâ beat. Lib. VII. cap. 24. & Epitom. cap. 11.*

^m *Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XX. cap. 7.*

466 *How the Doctrine of CHRIST's Reign on Earth is to be treated.*

concern therein, or it were a matter of mere speculation; for certainly all scripture is written for our learning, and ought to be studied and improved by us, to the glory of God, and our own edification. And as for those texts that speak of Christ's government, as exercised in this world, they contain matters in them not only awful and sublime, but our having just *Ideas* thereof, will be a direction to our faith, when we pray for the farther advancement of Christ's kingdom, as we are bound daily to do.

2. We must take heed that we do not give too great scope to our fancy, by framing imaginary schemes of our own, and then bringing in scripture, not without some violence offer'd to the sense thereof, to give countenance to them; nor ought we to acquiesce in such a sense of scripture, brought to support this doctrine, as is evidently contrary to other scriptures, or to the nature and spirituality of Christ's government.

3. We must take it for granted, that some of those scriptures, which relate to this matter, are hard to be understood, and therefore a humble modesty becomes us, in treating on this subject, rather than to censure those who differ from us, as though they were departed from that faith, which is founded on the most obvious and plain sense of scripture, especially if they maintain nothing that is derogatory to the glory of Christ; which, rule we shall endeavour to observe, in what remains to be consider'd on this subject. And, since most allow that there is a sense, in which Christ's kingdom shall be attended with greater circumstances of glory than it is at present, we shall proceed to shew,

(1.) How Christ's kingdom shall be advanced, in this lower world, beyond what it is at present, and that in such a way as agrees very well with the sense of several scriptures relating thereunto, without giving into some extreams, which many have done, who plead for Christ's personal reign on earth, in such a way, in which it cannot easily be defended. We freely own, as what we think agreeable to scripture,

1st. That, as Christ has, in all ages, display'd his glory, as King of the church, as has been before observed; so we have ground to conclude, from scripture, that the administration of his government in this world, before his coming to judg-

ment, will be attended with greater magnificence, more visible marks of glory, and various occurrences of providence, that shall tend to the welfare and happiness of his church, in a greater degree, than has been hitherto beheld, or experienced by it, since it was first planted by the ministry of the Apostles, after his ascension into heaven, which we think to be the sense, in general, of those scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, which speak of the latter day-glory. Some of the prophets seem to look farther than the first preaching of the gospel, and the glorious display of Christ's government that attended it, which was, in part, an accomplishment of some of their predictions relating hereunto, inasmuch as there are some expressions, which they make use of, that seem as yet not to have had their accomplishment: Thus the prophet *Isaiah*, when he speaks of *the glory of the Lord, as arising, and being seen upon the church, and the Gentiles coming to this light, and kings to the brightness thereof*^a; and many other things to the same purpose, which denote the glorious privileges that the gospel-church should enjoy. Though this, in a spiritual sense, may, in a great measure, be supposed to be already accomplished; yet there are other things, which he foretells concerning it, which do not yet appear to have had their accomplishment; as when he says, that *thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night*^b; as denoting the church's being perfectly free from all those afflictive dispensations of providence, which should tend to hinder the preaching and success of the gospel, and *that violence should be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders*^c; by which he intends the church's perfect freedom from all persecution, and *that the sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory*^d. This is so far from having been yet accomplished, that it seems to refer to the same thing, that is mentioned concerning the *New Jerusalem*^e, and almost express'd in the same words, which, if it be not a metaphorical description of the heavenly state, has a peculiar reference to the latter day-glory; and, when the prophet farther adds, that *thy people shall be all righteous*, as denoting

^a *Isai. lx. 1. & seq.*
^b *Rev. xxi. 25.*

^c *Ver. 18.*

^d *Ver. 18, 19.*

^e *Rev. xxi. 23.*

In what Respects CHRIST's Reign on Earth is to be allow'd 467

that holiness should almost universally obtain in the world, as much as iniquity has abounded in it, this does not appear to have been yet accomplished.

Again, when the prophet *Micah* speaks of the mountain of the house of the Lord, being established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and that people should flow unto it^c; though this, and some other things that he there mentions, may refer to the first preaching of the gospel, and the success thereof; yet what he farther adds, that *they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; and nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid*^d. This prophecy, so far as it may be taken otherwise than in a spiritual sense, seems to imply a greater degree of peace and tranquility than the gospel-church has hitherto enjoy'd; therefore when he says, that *this shall be in the last days*^e, we have reason to conclude that he does not mean barely the last, or gospel-dispensation, which commenced on our Saviour's ascension into heaven, but the last period thereof, viz. that time which we are now considering.

As to the account we have hereof in the New Testament, especially in many places in the book of the *Revelation*, that speak of the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and of his taking to himself his great power and reigning^f, and what is spoken concerning the thousand years-reign^g; whatever be the sense hereof, as to some circumstances of glory that shall attend this administration of the affairs of his kingdom, it certainly has not yet had its accomplishment, and therefore leads us to expect that it shall be attended with greater degrees of glory redounding to himself, which we call the latter day-glory.

2^{dly}. Many privileges will redound to the church hereby; for as Christ is said to reign on earth, so the saints are represented as reigning with him, as they say, *Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth*^h; and elsewhere, when the Apostle speaks of Christ's reigning a thousand years, he adds, that *they shall reign with him*ⁱ; which cannot be taken in any other sense than for a spiritual reign, agreeable to

Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world; therefore,

3^{dly}. We have, from hence, sufficient ground to conclude, that, when these prophecies shall have their accomplishment, the interest of Christ shall be the prevailing interest in the world, which it has never yet been in all respects, so that godliness shall be as much valued and esteemed, as it has been decry'd, and as universally; and it shall be reckon'd as great an honour to be a Christian, as it has, in the most degenerate age of the church, been matter of reproach. And to this we may add, that the church shall have a perfect freedom from persecution in all parts of the world; and a greater glory shall be put on the ordinances, and more success attend them, than has hitherto been experienced. In short, there shall be, as it were, an universal spread of religion and holiness to the Lord, throughout the world.

4^{thly}. When this glorious dispensation shall commence, we have sufficient ground to conclude, that the Anti-christian powers having been wholly subdued, the Jews shall be converted. This may be infer'd from the order in which this is foretold, in the book of the *Revelation*, in which the fall and utter ruin of *Babylon* is predicted, in *Chap. xviii.* And, after this, we read, in *Chap. xix.* of the marriage of the Lamb being come, and his wife, as having made her self ready, and others who are stiled blessed, are called to the marriage-supper, in *Ver. 7, 9.* This, as an ingenious and learned writer observes^b, seems to be a prediction of the call of the Jews, and of the saints and faithful, namely, the gospel-church, who were converted before this time, being made partakers of the spiritual privileges of Christ's kingdom, together with them, and so invited to the marriage-supper; accordingly, by the *Lamb's wife*, is intended the converted Jews, who are consider'd as espoused to him; and inasmuch as their being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, and not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God^c, occasioned their being rejected; so, when they are converted, and these new espousals are celebrated, it is particularly observed, that this righteousness shall be their greatest glory, the robe that they shall be adorned with; so that when this

^c Micah iv. 1.

^d Ver. 3, 4.

^e Ver. 1.

^f Rev. xi. 15, 17.

^g Chap. xx.

^h Rev.

v. 10.

ⁱ Rev. xx. 6.

^b Vid. Mede Comment. min. in Apocal. cap. xix. and Dr. More and others, who are of the same opinion as to this matter.

^c Rom. x. 3.

468 *Some Prophecies of the Call of the Jews not yet fulfilled.*

bride is said to have made herself ready, it follows, in *Rev. xix. 8.* *To her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linnen, clean and white; for the fine linnen is the righteousness of the saints.* This prophecy, being placed immediately before the account of the *thousand years-reign*, in *Chap. xx.* gives ground to conclude, that it shall be before it, or an introduction to it.

Object. I am sensible there are some who question whether those prophecies, especially such as are found in the Old Testament, that foretell the conversion of the *Jews*, had not their full accomplishment in the beginning of the gospel-state, when many churches were gather'd out of the *Jews*, and some of the Apostles were sent to exercise their ministry in those parts of the world, where the greatest number of them resided, upon which account *Peter* is called the Apostle of the *Jews*; for *God wrought effectually in him to the Apostleship of the circumcision*^d; and he, together with *James* and *John*, direct their inspired epistles to them in particular.

Answer. But to this it may be replied, that there are some scriptures, in the New Testament, relating to this matter, which don't seem, as yet, to have been accomplish'd, but respect this glorious dispensation, in which there shall be, as it were, an universal conversion of them in the latter day; particularly what the Apostle says, *If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead*^e? And he adds, *I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happen'd to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in, and then all Israel shall be saved*^f. This seems, as yet, not to have been accomplished; and as for those scriptures, in the Old Testament, that predict many things in favour of the *Jewish* nation; though I will not

deny that many of them had their accomplishment, either in their return from the *Babylonish* captivity, or in those that were converted in the beginning of the gospel-dispensation, yet I cannot think that they all had; for the prophet *Hosea* seems to foretel some things that are yet to come, when he speaks of them, as being *many days without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim*^g; which seems to point at the condition in which they now are; and he adds, in the following words, *Afterwards the children of Israel shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King*, to wit, *Christ*, and *shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days*; which seems to intend their conversion, which is yet expected.

Thus far our faith, as to this matter, may be said to be built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets: But, if we pretend to determine the way and manner in which this shall be done, we must have recourse to uncertain conjectures, instead of solid arguments. That learned writer, whom I have before mentioned^h, gives his opinion about it, which I will not pretend to disprove, though, indeed, the ingenuity thereof is more to be valued, than its convincing evidence. He supposes it shall be somewhat like the conversion of the Apostle *Paul*, by *Christ's* appearing with a glorious light on earth, and then retiring to heaven again: But the accommodating one particular circumstance of providence, (in which *Christ* seems to have another end to answer, namely, that *Paul* might be qualified for the Apostleship by this extraordinary sight of him) to this matter, as an argument of the *Jews* being converted in such a manner, proves nothing at all; therefore the best way is to leave this among the secrets which belong not to us to enquire afterⁱ. Thus concerning the con-

^d Gal. ii. 8.

^e Rom. xi. 15.

^f Ver. 25, 26.

^g Hof. iii. 4.

^h See *Mede's Works*, Book IV.

Epist. 17. Pag. 938—940.

ⁱ As for the story that *Mede* relates, to give countenance to this opinion, concerning *Christ's* appearing, in a glorious manner, upon the *Jews* demanding such an extraordinary event, (after a publick disputation, held three days, between *Gregentius*, an *Arabian* Bishop, and *Herbanus*, a *Jew*, a multitude of spectators being present, both *Jews* and *Christians*) and signifying that he was the same Person that their fathers had crucified; and their being first struck blind, as *Paul* was, and then, like him, converted and baptized, there are several things, in this account, that seem fabulous and incredible; though it is not improbable that there was a disputation held between *Gregentius* and the *Jews*, about the truth of the *Christian* religion, about the year of our Lord 470; or, as others suppose, 570; yet 'tis much to be questioned, whether the account we have of it be not spurious, written, by one who calls himself by that name, in *Greek*, about three or four hundred years since; and especially, because so extraordinary a miracle, wrought in an age when miracles had, for so considerable a time, ceased, is not taken notice of by other writers, of more reputation in the age, in which it is said to be wrought, especially since it would have been one of the most extraordinary proofs of the *Christian* religion that have been given since our Saviour's time. And it is very strange, that, as the result hereof, five millions and a half of the *Jews* should be converted, at once, by this miracle, and yet this thing be pass'd over in silence by other writers; and it is very much to be questioned, whether there were such a multitude of *Jews* gather'd together in one kingdom, and, indeed, whether that kingdom consisted of such a number of people; and, if there were so many *Jews*, we must suppose, that there was an equal number of *Christians* present; but that so many should be present at one disputation, seems incredible to a very great degree. *Vid. Glegen. disputat. cum Herban. fol. 192, & 200, & Cave. Hist. lit. Tom. I. pag. 363.*

A greater Spread of the Gospel shall attend CHRIST's Reign. 469

version of the *Jews*, as what is expected to go immediately before those glorious times that we are speaking of. And to this we may add,

5^{thly}. That there shall be a greater spread of the gospel through the dark parts of the earth; and so that scripture, which was but now refer'd to, concerning the *Gentiles coming to the light* of this glorious morning, or *the forces of the Gentiles coming* unto the church^k, shall have a fuller accomplishment than hitherto it has had; as also another scripture, in which the prophet says, that *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*^l. We will not deny but that this had, in part, an accomplishment, when the gospel was first preached by the Apostles; and, indeed, the prophet intimates, that these things shall come to pass when *a rod should come out of the stem of Jesse*^m, that is, after Christ's incarnation, who was of the seed of *David*, according to the flesh; therefore I cannot but think that those words, *In that day*, which we often meet with in scriptureⁿ, signify the whole gospel-dispensation, from the beginning thereof to its consummation, in Christ's coming to judgment; and then we may look for some things, which the prophet here foretells, as what should come to pass in one part thereof, and other things in another. And as to what respects the knowledge of Christ being so extensive, as that it is said to *cover the earth*; or Christ's being elsewhere said to be a *light to the Gentiles*, tho' it denote the first success of the gospel in the conversion of the *Gentiles*, it don't argue, that such-like texts shall not have a farther accomplishment when those other things shall come to pass, which the prophet mentions in the foregoing *Verses*, under the metaphor of the *wolf dwelling with the lamb*, &c. and other things, which relate to a more peaceable state of the church, than it has hitherto experienced. And it seems sufficiently evident, that, when this happy time shall come, the interest of Christ shall be the prevailing interest in the world, and the glory of his kingdom shall be more eminently display'd, than, at present, it is. In these respects, we are far from denying the reign of Christ in this lower world, for we think it plainly contained in scripture; nevertheless,

(2.) There are several things in their scheme, which we do not think sufficiently founded in scripture. As,

First, We cannot see sufficient reason to conclude that Christ shall appear visibly, or, as they call it, *personally*, in his human nature on earth, when he is said eminently to reign therein. If they intended nothing else, by Christ's appearing visibly, or personally, but his farther evincing his mediatorial glory, in the effects of his power and grace, which his church shall experience, as it does now, though in a less degree; or if they should say, that some greater circumstances of glory will then attend it, this would not be, in the least, denied: But more than this we cannot allow of, for the following reasons:

1st. Because the presence of Christ's human nature, here on earth, would not contribute so much to the church's spiritual edification and happiness, as his presence, by the powerful influence of his Holy Spirit, would do. This is sufficiently evident; for when he dwelt on earth, immediately after his incarnation, his ministry was not attended with that success that might have been expected; which gave him occasion to complain, as the prophet represents him, speaking to this purpose, *I have labour'd in vain, I have spent my strength for nought*, *Israel is not gather'd*; and, upon this, he is, as it were, comforted with the thought, that, notwithstanding, he should *be glorious in the eyes of the Lord*, that is, accepted of, and afterwards glorified by him, and that he should *be given for a light to the Gentiles*^o, that is, that the gospel should be preached to all nations, and that then greater success should attend it. Now this is owing to Christ's presence by his Spirit; therefore, if that be poured forth in a more plentiful degree on his church it will contribute more to the increase of its graces, and spiritual comforts, than his presence, in his human nature, could do without it; and therefore it cannot be argued, that Christ's presence, in such a way, is absolutely necessary to the flourishing state of the church, to that degree, in which it is expected in the latter day. 'Tis true, the presence of his human nature here on earth was absolutely necessary, for the impetration of redemption, or purchasing his people to himself by his death; but his presence in heaven, appearing as an Advocate for them, and, as the result thereof, sending down his Spirit, to work all grace in their souls, is, in its kind, also necessary. This our Saviour intimates to his disciples,

^k Isai. ix. 3, 5.

^l Chap. xi. 9.

^m Ver. 1.

ⁿ Ver. 10, 11.

^o Isai. xlix. 4—6.

470 *Why* CHRIST shall not reign visibly in his human Nature.

immediately before his ascension into heaven, when he says, *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come*^p; and, if there be some peculiar advantages redounding to the church, from Christ's continuance in heaven, as well as his ascending up into it, 'tis not reasonable to suppose that the church's happiness, as to their spiritual concerns, should arise so much from his coming from thence into this lower world, as it does from those continued powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, which are said to depend upon, and be the consequence of his sitting at the right hand of God in heaven.

2^{dly}. If he should appear on earth in his human nature, he must either divest himself of that celestial glory, which he is clothed with therein, agreeable to the heavenly state; or else his people, with whom he is supposed to reign, must have such a change made in their nature, that their bodies must be render'd celestial, and their souls enlarged in proportion to the heavenly state, otherwise they would not be fit to converse with him, in an immediate way, by reason of the present frailty of their nature. Of this we have various instances in scripture: Thus when *Moses* saw God's back-parts, that is, some extraordinary emblematical display of his glory, God tells him, *Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live*; and it follows, that while this glory passed by him, *God put him in a cleft of the rock, and cover'd him with his hand*^q, and assigns this as a reason, because his face should not be seen. He could not, because of the imperfection of this present state, behold the extraordinary emblematical displays of the divine glory, without the frame of nature's being broken thereby; on which occasion *Augustin* says, understanding the words in this sense, Lord, let me die, that I may see thee^r.

Moreover, when Christ appeared to the Apostle *Paul*, at his first conversion in the glory of his human nature, *he fell to the earth, trembling and astonished*^s, as not being able to converse with him; and afterwards, when the same Apostle was caught up into the *third heaven*, and had a view of the glory thereof, this was greater than his frail nature could bear, and therefore he says, that *whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell*^t. And *John*, the beloved

disciple, who conversed familiarly with him, when in his humbled state, and *leaned on his breast at supper*^u, when he appeared to him, after his ascension, in a glorious emblematical way, says, *When I saw him, I fell at his feet, as dead*^v; and the Apostle *Paul* says, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more*^w, that is, whilst we are in this world, inasmuch as we are incapable of conversing with him in his glorified human nature. This is also agreeable to what the Apostle says, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*^x, that is, man, in this present state, cannot enjoy those privileges which are reserved for him in heaven, which include in them a conversing with Christ, in his human nature, as well as with others, that are the inhabitants of heaven.

3^{dly}. If we suppose that Christ will reign personally on earth, it must be farther enquired; whether they that reign with him, during this period of time, shall die, or no? If not, that seems contrary to the fixed laws of nature, and this present state, as mortal, being opposed to a state of immortality and eternal life; but if they shall die, then they must necessarily lose one great advantage, which they now enjoy, in dying, namely, *being with Christ*^y; for when they die, in some respect, they must be said to depart from Christ, and, whatever advantage the presence of the human nature of Christ is of to the inhabitants of heaven, that they must be supposed to be deprived of, whilst he is reigning on earth. These, and other things to the same purpose, are consequences of Christ's personal reign, in his human nature, on earth; for which reason we cannot acquiesce in their opinion, who maintain it.

Secondly, There is another thing, that we cannot approve of, in the fore-mention'd scheme, relating to Christ's *thousand years-reign* on earth, when they assert several things, concerning the conversion of the *Jews*, which seem contrary to the analogy of faith. We have before taken it for granted that the *Jews* shall be converted, when this glorious reign begins, or immediately before it: But there are several things they add to this, which, we think, they have no ground, from scripture, to do; we shall mention *Two*.

(1.) That, after the *Jews* are convert-

^p John xvi. 7.
xii. 2.

^q 1 Cor. xv. 50.

^r Exod. xxxiii. 20—23.

^s John xxi. 20.

^t Phil. i. 23.

^u Moriar ut videam.

^v Acts ix. 6.

^w 2 Cor.

^x 2 Cor. v. 16.

^y Rev. i. 17. compared with the foregoing verses;

Temple-Service not reviv'd. Gospel-Ordinances continued. 47 I

ed, they shall continue a distinct body of people, govern'd by their own laws, as they were before Christ's incarnation. But we rather conclude, that they shall be join'd to, and become one body with the Christian church, all marks of distinction being laid aside, and shall be *grafted into the same olive-tree*^b, that is, into Christ; and certainly the middle wall of partition, which was taken away by Christ, shall never be set up again. This seems to be intended by our Saviour's words, *There shall be one fold, and one shepherd*^c.

(2.) Besides this, there are several other things, which they assert, concerning the *Jews* rebuilding the temple at *Jerusalem*, and that being the principal seat of Christ's reign, where the saints shall reside and reign with him. As for the temple, that was only designed as a place of worship, during the dispensation before Christ's incarnation, and was, in some respects, a type of his dwelling among us in our nature; and as for the temple-service, as it is now abolish'd, it shall continue to be so, till the end of the world; and then, what occasion is there for a temple to be built?

And as for *Jerusalem's* being re-built, or the land of *Judea's* being the principal seat of Christ's kingdom on earth, we humbly conceive that to be an ungrounded supposition, or a mistake of the sense of some scriptures in the Old Testament, which were literally fulfilled in the building of *Jerusalem*, after the *Babylonish* captivity, and have no reference to any thing now to come. And as for the land of *Canaan*, though it had a glory put on it some ages before our Saviour's incarnation, as being the scene of many wonderful dispensations of providence, in favour of that people, while they remain'd distinct from all other nations in the world; yet we cannot conclude that it shall be a distinct place of residence for them, when, being converted, they are joined to the Christian church: And therefore the land of *Canaan* will be no more accounted of, than any other part of the world; and, considering also the smallness of the place, we cannot think it sufficient to contain the great number of those, who, together with the *Jews*, shall be the happy subjects of Christ's kingdom.

Thirdly, There is another thing, in which we cannot agree with some who treat of Christ's reign on earth, namely, when

they suppose that the saints, who are to reign with him, are to be in a sinless state, little short of the heavenly. 'Tis true, herein they are much divided in their sentiments: But some assert, that they shall be free from all the remainders of corruption; and, indeed, their argument leads them to it, if we consider the saints as being raised from the dead, and their souls brought back from heaven, into which, when they first enter'd, they were perfectly freed from sin. From hence it will necessarily follow, that there will be no room for the mortification of sin, striving against it, or resisting those temptations, which we are now liable to from it: This we cannot conclude to be a privilege that any have ground to expect, while in this world; and, indeed, those graces, whereby we subdue our corruptions, or strive against temptations, are peculiarly adapted to this present state, in opposition to the heavenly.

Moreover, when they say, as some do, that this reign shall be such, as that the saints shall be free from all manner of trouble, internal or external, personal or relative, at least, so long as Satan is bound, that is, to the end of these thousand years; this seems to be more than what Christ has given his people ground to expect, who tells them, that, *in the world, they shall have*, at least, some degree of *tribulation*^d, and that they must wait for a perfect freedom from it till they come to heaven.

Fourthly, We cannot think, as some do, (as has been before observed) that, during this thousand years-reign, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, shall cease, and all other laws and ordinances, which Christ has ordained for the gathering and building up of particular churches, for the bringing in his elect, for the propagating his name and interest in the world by these methods, shall all be discontinued, as there will be no occasion for them. This is what we think altogether ungrounded; for we cannot but suppose, that as soon as the whole number of the election of grace are brought in, and thereby the end and design of the preaching the gospel is answered; or when Christ can say, *Here am I, and all that thou hast given me*, he will present them to the Father, and so receive his militant church into a triumphant state in heaven. And, indeed, it seems a very weak foundation, on which this part of their scheme depends

^b Rom. xi. 24.

^c John x. 16.

^d John xvi. 33.

472 *In what Sense some understand the first Resurrection.*

when they say, that those texts which speak of Christ's *being with his ministers to the end of the world*^e; and elsewhere, that, in the Lord's Supper, his death is to be commemorated *till he come*^f; relate to the coming of Christ in the *Millennium*, which seems a very much strain'd and forc'd sense thereof. And as for that other scripture, wherein it is said, that *the New Jerusalem had no temple*, and that it had *no need of the sun, nor the moon, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof*^g; this must not be brought to prove that the ordinances of divine worship, shall cease during this thousand years-reign, unless they can first make it appear that the *New Jerusalem* has reference thereunto; whereas some think that the Holy Ghost is here describing the heavenly state, which agrees very well with its connection with what is mentioned in the foregoing *Chapter*, and, if this be the sense thereof, the glory which the church shall then arrive to, is such as shall be after the final judgment, and consequently it is a description of the glorious state of Christ's kingdom in heaven, rather than here on earth.

Thus having consider'd what we think to be the general design of those scriptures, which speak of Christ's reigning in, or over the earth, and of the happy state of the church at that time; and, on the other hand, endeavour'd to prove, that several additional circumstances, which, some suppose, will attend it, are not sufficiently founded in scripture, and, in some respects, seem inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and, with the ground we have to expect, that the present mode of administration, and the laws and ordinances thereof, shall continue as long as the world endures. We shall now consider the sense they give of some scriptures, on which the main stress of their argument depends, together with the inconclusiveness of their way of reasoning from them, and also in what sense we apprehend those scriptures are to be understood.

1. As to what concerns the *first resurrection*, which they found on that scripture in *Rev. xx. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath a part in the first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* A learned and judicious writer^h supposes, that the first resurrection shall be only of the

martyrs, and that it is to be taken in a literal sense, and that this shall open the scene of Christ's thousand years-reign, and that the second resurrection shall be at the close thereof, in which the whole world shall be raised from the dead, and then follows the final judgment: But he differs from many of the ancient and modern *Cbiliafts*, in that he says, he dares not so much as imagine that Christ shall visibly converse with men on earth; for his kingdom ever hath been, and shall be, a kingdom, which is of such a nature, that his throne and kingly residence is in heaven, and, though the deceased martyrs shall re-assume their bodies, and reign, yet it shall be in heaven; whereas the saints, who shall be then living, and have not worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark, these shall reign on earth; for he supposes, that scripture, that relates to this matter, to contain a vision of two distinct things, namely, one respecting those that *were beheaded for the witness of Jesus*, and these lived and reigned with Christ, but not on earth; the other respecting those, who, though they had not suffer'd, had *not worshipped the beast, nor his image.* These also reigned during this thousand years, not in heaven, but on earth. These are consider'd, as in their way to heaven; the other, as received into the heavenly country, as a peculiar prerogative confer'd upon them, as the reward of their martyrdom; and this first resurrection he supposes to be against no article of faith, but may be as well defended, in the literal sense thereof, as the resurrection we read of in *Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.* in which 'tis said, that *the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose and came out of their graves, after Christ's resurrection*; and, with a becoming modesty, he cites *Augustin's* words to this purposeⁱ, that if nothing more were intended hereby, but that the delights of this kingdom were spiritual, the opinion would be tolerable, and that that *Father* was once of that judgment. Thus he says as much as can be said in defence of this opinion; and nothing is wanting, to support his argument, but sufficient evidence, that the text must necessarily be taken in a literal sense.

But when others proceed much farther, and conclude that Christ shall appear visibly on earth, and that the design of the *first resurrection* is, that they, who shall be

^e *Matt. xxviii. 20.*

^f *1 Cor. xi. 26.*

^g *Rev. xxi. 23.*

^h *Vid. Mede de Resurrec. prim.*

Lib. III. Pag. 740, 749, 750.

ⁱ *Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. xx. cap. 7.*

raised from the dead, should live here on earth; this we see far less reason to conclude to be the sense of those words, and accordingly shall take leave to consider what may be said in opposition to it.

Therefore, if they shall be raised, their bodies must either be corruptible and mortal, or incorruptible and immortal; to suppose that they shall be raised corruptible and mortal, and consequently liable to the other infirmities of life, is to suppose their resurrection to be of the same kind with that of *Lazarus*, and others that were raised by our Saviour: But this is so disagreeable to the character of saints, rais'd from the dead to reign with Christ, that it is not generally asserted by those who treat on this subject. Therefore they must be raised incorruptible and immortal; and, if so, it will follow from hence, that this world will not be a place fit for their abode; for they shall be raised with celestial bodies, and so fitted to inhabit the heavenly mansions; neither will those accommodations, which this earth affords, the food it produces, or those other conveniences which we enjoy therein, by the blessing of providence, be agreeable to persons who are raised up in a state of perfection, as they must be supposed to be, or, as the Apostle styles it, *raised in glory*. And, since they are appointed to live and converse with men in this lower world, I cannot see how there can be any conversation between them and others, who continue to live in this world, not, like them, raised from the dead, but retaining their present mortal frame. If *their vile bodies*, as the Apostle speaks concerning the bodies of the saints, when raised from the dead, *shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body*^k; how can weak frail creatures intimately converse with them? And if it be said, that they shall not be raised with such a glory, but that this shall be defer'd till they are translated to heaven, as was true with respect to our Saviour's human nature, after his resurrection; though this be possible, yet it seems not agreeable to the account we have of the circumstances of glory, with which the saints shall be raised from the dead.

But that which seems to make this opinion more improbable, is, that it is inconsistent with that state of blessedness, into which they have been once admitted, namely, in their souls, wherein they have been in the immediate vision and fruition of God; as travellers arrived to their jour-

ney's end, and wanting nothing to complete their blessedness but their resurrection; and, now they are supposed to be raised from the dead; yet their blessedness is diminish'd, by their being appointed to live in this lower world, and, as we may say, to leave that better country, in which they have been, to re-assume the character and condition of pilgrims and sojourners upon earth.

To this it will be objected, that we may as reasonably suppose, that these saints shall be raised in circumstances, fit to converse with the rest of the world, as any that have been raised from the dead have formerly been. I cannot deny but that this is possible; but yet it does not seem probable, inasmuch as they shall not be raised from the dead for the same end and design that others have been, that the power of God might be illustrated, or some contested truth confirmed by this miracle; but that some special honour, or privilege, might be confer'd on them, as the reward of their former sufferings: But this is disagreeable to their being raised in such a state, as that their happiness is thereby diminished.

Moreover, what valuable end is answered by this their change of condition, which might, in some measure, tend to justify the assertion? Must they live here, that they might perform an extraordinary ministry, to promote the edification of their mortal brethren, whom they found living upon earth? This was not absolutely necessary, for God has appointed other ways for the edification of his church; and, if he did not think fit, before, to send down ministers, to preach the gospel, from heaven, to them, but ordain'd the common method of preaching it by others, less qualified for this work, who are subject to like infirmities with those to whom they preach, why should we suppose such an alteration in the method of divine providence on this particular occasion?

And, if we suppose that they shall continue on earth till Christ's appearing to judgment, then it must be argued, that they were sent here not only to be helpers of the faith of others, who live therein, but to be exposed, in common with them, to a second warfare upon earth; not, indeed, with flesh and blood, but with those who are represented in the same *Chapter*, in which the *first resurrection*, and *thousand years-reign*, are mentioned, as *compassing the camp of the saints about, and the be-*

^k Philip. iii. 21.

474 *The literal Sense of the first Resurrection debated.*

loved city; and therefore they are called back, from a triumphant to a militant state. If it be said, that they shall be admitted into heaven before this battel begins, that can hardly be supposed; for if God send them to be companions with his mortal saints, in their prosperous state, will he call them away when the time of their greatest danger approaches, in which their presence might be of the greatest service to their brethren, who are left to struggle with these difficulties? Therefore, upon the whole, we cannot suppose that any shall, in a literal sense, be raised from the dead, till this glorious, though spiritual reign of Christ shall be at an end, and the day of judgment draws nigh, which is agreeable to the general scope of all those scriptures, which speak of the resurrection and final judgment.

Object. But to this it will be objected, that the scripture elsewhere intimates, that there shall be two resurrections; for the Apostle says, in 1 *Thess.* iv. 16. that *the dead in Christ shall rise first*; therefore why may not this first resurrection be understood in the same sense with that mentioned in *Rev.* xx. which has been before consider'd?

Answer. We do not deny but that this resurrection, which the Apostle speaks of, must be taken in a literal sense; but let it be observed, that he does not here mention any thing of the thousand years-reign, but of the day of judgment, when *Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the arch-angel*, with which the glory of that day shall begin, and then the dead shall be raised, in which the saints and faithful shall have the pre-eminence; they shall *rise first*, that is, before others, mentioned in the following *Verses*, *that are alive, who shall be caught up with them in the clouds*. And this shall also be done, before the wicked shall be raised, to the end that, when Christ appears, *they*, as it is said elsewhere, *may appear with him in glory*; and that they may bear a part in the solemnity of that day, and be happy in his presence; when others are raised to *shame and everlasting contempt*, and filled with the utmost confusion and distress.

Moreover, this *first resurrection* of those that died in Christ, is not particularly applied to them that suffered martyrdom for him, much less is there any account of its being a thousand years before the general resurrection; therefore it may very well be understood of a resurrection

a very short time before it, and consequently gives no countenance to the opinion, which has been before consider'd, concerning this resurrection, as going before the reign of Christ on earth.

2. There is another scripture brought in defence of another part of their scheme, taken from the Apostle's words, in *Rom.* viii. 21—23. where he speaks of the *creatures present bondage*, and future deliverance, and their *waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies*, which, they suppose, will have its accomplishment, when this reign of Christ begins: But I cannot think that the Apostle, in that scripture, intends anything else, but that the whole creation is liable, at present, to the curse, consequent upon man's fall; and that the deliverance he speaks of, shall be at the general resurrection, when the saints shall be raised immortal and incorruptible, which is what they now wait and hope for.

Thus we have consider'd the sense that is given of some scriptures, by those who understand the reign of Christ on earth, as attended with various circumstances, which we cannot readily allow of; and shewed, that some of those texts, which are usually brought to support that particular scheme, have reference to the return of the *Jews* from captivity¹, and others, that predict their building of *Jerusalem*, and the temple there^m, and the setting up their civil and religious polity, had their accomplishment after their return from the *Babylonish* captivity; and that those, which seem to look farther, and respect some privileges which they shall enjoy in the last days, will be fulfilled, when they are converted to Christianity, and made partakers of many spiritual privileges, in common with the gospel-church; therefore I need only mention two scriptures more, which we understand in a sense very different from what some do, who treat of Christ's reign on earth. As,

(1.) That in which we have an account of the general conflagration, which, as was before observed, some few, who give too great scope to their wit and fancy, beyond all the bounds of modesty, and without considering those absurdities that will follow from it, have maintain'd that it shall be immediately before Christ's reign on earth begins: The scripture they bring, for that purpose, is that in 2 *Pet.* iii. 10, 13. in which the Apostle says, that *the heavens shall pass away with a*

¹ See Ezek. xxxvii. 21. and Jer. xxxvii. 7—13. & *alibi passim.*

^m Jer. xxix. 5. Isai. xlv. 28.

Of the general Conflagration, and New Heavens and Earth. 475

great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. This scripture, it must be confess'd, is hard to be understood. We are far from thinking, as some do, that it is only a metaphorical description of some remarkable providences, tending to the ruin of Christ's enemies, and the advantage of his people; certainly the words are to be taken in a literal sense; for the Apostle had been speaking, in the foregoing Verses, of the old world, which, being overflown with water, perished; which is, without doubt, to be taken in a literal sense. And now he speaks, as some call it, of a second deluge, which shall be not by water, but by fire^a, in which the heavens and the earth shall pass away, or be dissolved, that is, changed, as to the form thereof, though not annihilated. By the heavens and the earth, the learned Mede well understands that part of the frame of nature, that was subjected to the curse, or that is inhabited by Christ's enemies, and includes in it the earth, water, and air, but not the heavenly bodies, which are not only at a vast distance from it, but it is little more than a point, if compared to them for magnitude. And he also (notwithstanding some peculiarities held by him, as before mentioned, relating to the Millennium) justly observes, that this conflagration shall not be till the end of the world, and consequently it shall be immediately before the day of judgment; and, indeed, the Apostle intimates as much, when he speaks of this awful providence, as reserved to the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, in Ver. 7. The main difficulty to be accounted for, is, what is meant by these new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, which are appointed as an habitation for the righteous. Concerning which, if I may be allowed to give my sense thereof, with that humility and modesty that the difficulty of the subject calls for, I cannot think that there is any absurdity, if we suppose, that, by these new heavens and new earth, the Apostle means, that the form of them shall be so changed, as that they shall be an apartment of heaven, in which, together with those other parts of the frame of nature, which are designed to be the seat of the blessed, the saints shall dwell and reign with Christ for ever.

(2.) We shall now consider the sense that may be given of that scripture, in Rev. xx. and more especially what we read therein, concerning the first resurrection, in which the martyrs are said to live, when this thousand years-reign begins, and the rest of the dead not to live, till these thousand years be finished, in Ver. 4, 5. on which the stress of the whole controversy principally depends. I cannot but adhere to their opinion, who think that these words are to be taken in a metaphorical sense, and then they, who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, viz. the martyrs, shall live when Christ's spiritual reign begins, that is, the cause, for which they suffer'd martyrdom, shall be revived: This is supposed to have been in a languishing and dying condition, during the reign of Anti-christ, and, towards the close thereof, to be at the lowest ebb, and, as it were, dead; I say, this shall be revived, these martyrs shall, as it were, live again, not in their own persons, but in their successors, who espouse the same cause. Before this, the enemies of Christ, and his gospel, persecuted and trampled on his cause, insulted the memory of those that had suffer'd for it; but afterwards, when 'tis said, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, then Christ's cause revives, and that which was victorious over it dies, and shall not rise again, or be in any capacity to give disturbance to the church, till the thousand years are finished, and Satan is loosed again out of prison, to give life and spirit to it; and then we read of a new war begun, a fresh battle fought, *the nations deceived, the camp of the saints compassed about*; and this will continue till Christ shall come, and put an end to it at the day of judgment, when the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. In this sense some, not without ground, understand the account which is given of the slaying and rising of the witnesses^c, as signifying that the gospel, which before had been persecuted, and the preaching thereof prohibited, shall then prevail without restraint. The witnesses death, denotes their being silenced; their rising and standing upon their feet, their having liberty again to preach. And therefore why may we not understand the resurrection, in the Chapter we are now considering, as taken in the same sense? And this agrees very well with the sense of Ver. 6. in which it is said, concerning them, who have a part in the first resurrection, that is, the saints,

^a So Irenæus styles it, Adv. Hæc. Lib. V. cap. 29. Diluvium superumet Ignis.

^c Rev. xi. 7, 11.

476 *The Church said to die, and rise again, in a mystical Sense.*

who live and reign with Christ, *on such this second death hath no power*, that is, whatever the enemies of the church may attempt against them, after this thousand years-reign, shall be to no purpose; for they shall not prevail, their cause shall never die again. Or, if it be applied to their persons, the meaning is, that they shall not die eternally. Eternal death is a punishment to be inflicted on their enemies, who shall *be cast into the lake of fire*, which is expressly called the *second death*, in *Ver. 14*. But these, as it is said, in *Rev. ii. 11*. shall not be *hurt of it*, i.e. not exposed to it; but, as they have lived with Christ, in a spiritual sense, on earth, so they shall live with him for ever in heaven.

We are, in giving this sense of the text, under a kind of necessity to recede from the literal sense thereof, because we cannot altogether reconcile that to the analogy of faith. And it will not seem strange to any, who consider the mystical or allegorical stile in which this book of the *Revelation* is written, that this text should be understood in the same sense: However, that this sense may be farther justified, let it be consider'd, that it is not disagreeable to what we find in many other scriptures, that speak of the church's deliverance from its troubles, under the metaphor of a *resurrection*; and of the destruction of its enemies, under the metaphor of *death*. Thus the *Babylonish* captivity, and *Israel's* deliverance from it, is described, in *Ezek. xxxvii. 1—12*. The former by a metaphor taken from a *valley full of dry bones*; the latter by another taken from their being *rais'd out of their graves, living and standing on their feet an exceeding great army*; and, in *Ezra ix. 9*. we read of God's extending mercy to them, who were before bondmen, and not forsaking them in their bondage, giving them an opportunity to set up the temple and worship of God. This is called, *giving them a reviving*; and the prophet, speaking concerning the captivity, in *Lam. iii. 6*. says, *He has set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old*; and the prophet *Isaiab* speaks concerning their return from captivity, as a resurrection from the dead, *Tby dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust*^p.

Many other scriptures might be cited, out of the writings of the prophets, to justify this metaphorical sense of the words, *death* and *resurrection*, and also some out

of the New Testament, of which I need only refer to one, which has a particular respect to the subject under our present consideration, when the Apostle says, that *the receiving of them*, to wit, of the church of the *Jews*, when converted, shall be as *life from the dead*^q; therefore the scripture gives countenance to its being called a *resurrection*.

On the other hand, we might refer to some scriptures that speak of the ruin of the church's enemies, under the metaphor of a state of death: Thus, in *Isai. xxvi. 14*. *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish*; and, in *Chap. xiv*. he describes the utter destruction of the *Chaldeans*, the church's enemies, by whom they had been carried captive, in a very beautiful manner, and carries on the metaphor, taken from persons departed out of this world, in *Ver. 9, 10, 11*. and says, in particular, concerning the king of *Babylon*, *Tby pomp is brought down to the grave, the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee*; which signifies the political death of that empire, and the utter inability which followed upon this, of their giving disturbance to the church of God, as they had formerly done. These, and many other scriptures of the like nature, may, in some measure, justify the sense we have given of the scripture before mentioned, relating to the death and resurrection of Christ's cause, for which his martyrs suffer'd, and the death of the Anti-christian cause, which ensued thereupon.

Thus concerning Christ's reign on earth, and what may be probably supposed to be the sense of those scriptures that are brought in defence thereof. We have not enter'd into the particular consideration of what is said concerning the time, or the number of years, which this glorious dispensation shall continue. We read, indeed, of Christ's *reigning a thousand years*, by which we are not to understand the eternal exercise of his government; for it is said not only to be *on earth*, but this period is also consider'd, as what shall have an end; which that excellent *Father*, whom I before mentioned, did not duly consider, when he reckon'd this as a probable sense of this thousand years, and produces that scripture to justify his sense of the words, in

^p *Isai. xxvi. 19*.

^q *Rom. xi. 15*.

which

What some understand by 1000 Years. These not yet began. 477

which 'tis said, that God hath remember'd his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations^r; by which we are to understand, that God will establish his covenant with his people, and make good the promises thereof throughout all the ages of eternity. This, indeed, sufficiently proves that a thousand years might be taken for eternity, agreeably to the sense of scripture; but it is plain, from the context, that it is not to be so taken here in *Rev. xx.*

As for the other sense he gives of this *thousand years*^t, namely, that they may be understood as containing a great but indeterminate number of years, in the latter part of the last thousand which the world shall continue, so that, by a figurative way of speaking, a part of a thousand years may be called a thousand years^t; this I will not pretend to argue against, nor to say that those divines are in the wrong, who suppose that a thousand years is put for a great number of years, and that it does not belong to us to say how many; I say, whether we are to acquiesce in this, or in the literal sense of the words, I will not determine; only we must conclude, as we have scripture-ground for it, that they shall end a little before Christ's coming to judgment; during which short interval it is said, Satan will be loosed a little season, and make some fresh efforts against the church, till he, and those that are spirited, and excited by him, to give disturbance to it, perish in the attempt, and are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. This is all that I shall say concerning the time appointed for this glorious reign, our principal design being to speak concerning the advantages that the church shall enjoy under it.

We have endeavoured to avoid two extremes, namely, that of those who do not put a just difference between it and the heavenly state; as also another extreme, which we have not yet mention'd, which several modern writers have given into, who suppose, that this thousand years-reign is long since past, and that the binding of Satan therein consisted only in some degrees of restraint laid on him, and that the reign it self contained in it

only some advantages, comparatively small, that the church enjoy'd at that time, and that the thousand years began in *Constantine's* time, when the empire became Christian, about the year of our Lord 300, and that they ended about the year 1300, when the church met with some new difficulties from the eastern parts of the world, which they suppose to be intended by *Gog and Magog*^u. But we cannot see sufficient reason to adhere to this opinion, because the state of the church, when Satan is said to be bound a thousand years, is represented as attended with a greater degree of spiritual glory, holiness, purity of doctrine, and many other blessings attending the preaching the gospel, than we are given to understand by any history that it has yet enjoy'd.

As to what concerns the general method, in which we have insisted on this difficult subject, I hope we have not maintained any thing that is derogatory to the glory of Christ's kingdom, nor what has a tendency to detract from the real advantage of the saints. Do they, on the other side of the question, speak of his reigning? so do we. They, indeed, consider him as reigning in his human nature, and conversing therein with his saints; which opinion we cannot give into, for reasons before mentioned: But it is not inconsistent with the glory of Christ to assert, as we have done, that he shall reign spiritually; and the consequence hereof shall be, not the external pomp and grandeur of his subjects, but their being adorned with purity and universal holiness, and enjoying as much peace, as they have reason to expect in any condition, short of heaven. Moreover, we have not advanced any thing that has a tendency to detract from the spiritual blessings and advantages of Christ's kingdom, which the saints shall enjoy, in this happy period of time. If, notwithstanding all this, it be said that there are some advantages which the contrary scheme of doctrine supposes the saints shall enjoy on earth, beyond what we think they have ground to expect from scripture; nevertheless, their not enjoying them here will be fully compensated with a greater degree of glory, which

^r Psal. cv. 8.

^t Vid. *Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XX. cap. 7.*

^u This is very agreeable to the scripture-mode of speaking; nothing is more common than for the cardinal number to be put for the ordinal, and so the meaning is, that this reign shall continue to the thousandth year, or till the last 1000 years of the world shall have an end, what part soever of this 1000 years it began in: Thus God tells *Abraham*, in *Gen. xv. 13.* that his seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, to wit, *Egypt*, and shall serve them, and afflict them 400 years; whereas it is certain that his seed were not above 215 years in *Egypt*, and they were not slaves, or afflicted there 100 years; therefore the meaning is, *q. d.* that they shall afflict them till 400 years are expired, from this time.

^u See *Napeir on the Revelation, Prop. 33, 34. Pag. 61, 62.*

478 Of the Eternity of CHRIST's Mediatorial Kingdom.

they shall have when they reign with Christ in heaven; which leads us to consider,

The eternity of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, concerning which it is said, *He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end*^x. As he is described, by the Apostle, as *a Priest for ever*^y, and as *ever living to make intercession for those that come unto God by him*^z; so he shall exercise his kingly office for ever; not according to the present method of the administration thereof, but in a way adapted to that glorified state, in which his subjects shall be, in another world.

There is, indeed, a scripture that seems to assert the contrary, which the Socinians give a very perverse sense of, as though it were inconsistent with his proper deity; and accordingly they suppose, that, as he was constituted a divine Person, or had the honour of a God, or King, confer'd on him, when he ascended into heaven, as the reward of the faithful discharge of his ministry on earth; so this was designed to continue no longer than to the end of the world, when he is to be set on a level with other inhabitants of heaven, and *be subject to the Father*, when *God shall be all in all*. This they suppose to be the meaning of the Apostle's words, in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 28. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have deliver'd up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; and, when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all*. It must be acknowledged, that this is one of those things, in Paul's epistles, that are hard to be understood; but I humbly conceive that we may give a sense of it, very remote to that but now mentioned, which is subversive of his Godhead, and of the eternity of his kingdom. Therefore, for the understanding thereof, let it be consider'd,

(1.) That when the Apostle speaks of *the end coming, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father*; by *the kingdom*, we may, without the least strain on the sense of the text, understand his material kingdom, or the subjects of his kingdom, which is very agreeable to that sense of the word, both in scripture and in common modes of speaking; as when

we call the inhabitants of a city, *the city*; so we call the subjects of a kingdom, *the kingdom*: Taking the words in this sense, we must suppose, that the subjects of Christ's kingdom are his trust and charge, and that he is to deliver them up to the Father at last, as persons whom he has govern'd, in such a way, as that the great ends of his exercising his kingly office, have been fully answer'd, as to what concerns his government in this lower world. This is no improbable sense of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father.

But it may also be taken in another sense, to wit, for the form of Christ's kingdom, or the present mode of government, exercised towards those who are in an imperfect state: This shall *be deliver'd up*, that is, he shall cease to govern his people in such a way as he now does; but it don't follow, from hence, that he shall not continue to govern them in a way adapted to the heavenly state.

And when it is said, that *he shall put down all rule, and all authority and power*, the meaning is, that all civil and ecclesiastical government, as it is now exercised in the world, or the church, shall be put down, as useless, or disagreeable to the heavenly state; but it does not follow, from hence, that he shall lay aside his own authority and power.

(2.) When it is said, in Ver. 25. that *he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet*, it does not imply that he shall not reign afterwards, but that he shall not cease to reign till then, which is the sense of that parallel scripture, in which it is said, *Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*^a; which does not denote that he shall, after his enemies are made his footstool, sit no longer at God's right hand, as advanced there to the highest honour. It is very evident, from several scriptures, as well as our common mode of speaking, that the word *Until* does not always signify the cessation of what is said to be done before, but only the continuance thereof till that time, as well as afterwards: Thus 'tis said, *Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us*^b; by which we are not to understand, that, when God extends mercy, the eyes of his people cease to wait upon him, but we will not leave off waiting upon him, until we have received the mercies we hope for; and, after that we will continue to wait for those mer-

^x Luke i. 33.

^y Heb. v. 6.

^z Chap. vii. 25.

^a Psal. cx. 1.

^b Psal. cxxiii. 2.

cies that we shall farther stand in need of; and elsewhere *Job* says, *Until I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me; mine heart shall not reproach me as long as I live*^c. This does not imply that he would retain his integrity no longer than he lived. If the word *Until* be frequently used in this sense, then there is no ground to suppose that when 'tis said *Christ shall reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet*, that it denotes that he shall not reign to eternity, nor any longer than *till all things be subdued unto him*: But, indeed, it rather argues, that he shall reign for ever, than that he shall cease to reign; for when all enemies are removed out of the way, and his right to govern is no longer contested by them, shall he then cease to exercise that sovereign dominion which he has over all things?

(3.) Since the main difficulty, and the greatest stress of the argument brought against the eternity of Christ's kingdom, is what the Apostle farther adds, in *Ver. 28.* of this *Chapter*, that *when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that God may be all in all*. 'Tis said, indeed, that the Son shall be *subject to the Father*, viz. as man; but can any one suppose that the Son is not now subject to the Father? And when 'tis farther added, *God shall be all in all*, is it to be supposed that he is not now so? If this be far from being the true meaning of these words, then the sense they give thereof is not just; but we are to understand them thus, that *in the end*, when all the ends of Christ's administering his mediatorial government in this lower world are answered, and the present form or method of administration shall cease, then it shall appear that the whole plan thereof had the most direct tendency to promote the Father's glory, or to answer those most valuable ends, for which this mediatorial kingdom was erected; and, by this means, it will more eminently appear, than ever it has done before, that this work is from God, and worthy of him. If the Son's kingdom had not been subjected, or subservient to the Father's glory, the subjects thereof would not have been *delivered up*, or presented to the Father, as the Mediator's trust and charge committed to him; and, if *God* had not *been all in all*, or the administration of Christ's kingdom had not been the effect of divine power, in all the branches thereof, it would not have had so glorious and

successful an issue, as it will appear to have in the great day. This I take to be the plain sense of this scripture, which cannot reasonably be denied, if we consider that it is very agreeable to our common mode of speaking, to say, that a thing is, when it appears to be what it is, which may be thus illustrated: Suppose a King has gain'd a victory over his enemies, or quell'd some civil broils, or tumults, in his kingdom, he may say, upon that occasion, *Now I am King*, that is, I appear to be so, or my establishment in the kingdom seems less precarious. We have an instance of the like mode of speaking in scripture, when *David* says, upon the occasion of bringing the affairs of his kingdom to a settled state, after *Absalom's* rebellion, *Do not I know that I am this day King over Israel*^d? that is, I appear to be so, since that, which tended to unhinge, or give disturbance to my government, is removed out of the way.

Moreover, that things are said to be, when they appear to be, is agreeable to that mode of speaking used by the *Israelites*, when, upon their receiving the fullest conviction that the Lord was God, pursuant to *Elijah's* prayer, by an extraordinary display of his glory, in working a miracle to confute their idolatry, they fell on their faces, and said, *The Lord he is God*, that is, he now appears to be so, by those extraordinary effects of his power, which we have beheld. If therefore this be no uncommon mode of speaking, why may we not apply it to that text which we are now endeavouring to explain? and so conclude, that the sense but now given of the Son's being subject to the Father, and God's being all in all, contains in it nothing absurd, or contrary to the scripture way of speaking, and consequently the eternity of Christ's kingdom is not overthrown thereby; and therefore we must conclude, that as his kingly government is now exercis'd in a way agreeable to the present condition of his church, so it shall be exercised in a glorious manner, suited to the heavenly state, when all his saints and subjects shall be brought there.

Thus we have consider'd Christ, as executing his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; we now proceed to speak concerning the twofold state in which they have been, are, or shall be executed by him; and *first* concerning his state of humiliation.

^c Job xxviii. 5—7.

^d 2 Sam. xix. 22.

480 *Of the Estate of CHRIST's Humiliation; what it was.*

QUEST. XLVI. *What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?*

ANSW. The estate of Christ's humiliation was, that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a Servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and, after his death, until his resurrection.

QUEST. XLVII. *How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?*

ANSW. Christ humbled himself in his conception, in that being, from all eternity, the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased, in the fulness of time, to become the Son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

QUEST. XLVIII. *How did Christ humble himself in his life?*

ANSW. Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled, and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh; whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

IN considering Christ's low and humble state, while he was in this world, we may observe, that this is stiled, his *emptying himself of his glory*, when he took on him the form of a Servant: Thus

the Apostle expresses it, in *Phil. ii. 7.* for so the words^e, which we render, *he made himself of no reputation*, are to be understood. Now, since his incarnation is so express'd, we must, before we proceed any farther on this subject, enquire; how this was consistent with his Godhead? and, whether he might be said, in taking our nature, to empty or humble himself? and also, whether his incarnation may, properly speaking, be called a part of his humiliation?

There is a sense in which he may be said to humble himself in his divine nature; as, when we read of *God's humbling himself, to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth*^f. This is so far from being a dishonour to him, that it is expressive of his glory, as it argues, that there is an infinite distance between him and the creature. In this sense, the second Person in the Godhead might be said to humble himself, in assuming the human nature, and thereby, as it were, casting a vail over his glory. This is such a sense of Christ's humiliation, as denotes infinite condescension, but no diminution, or loss of divine glory; neither can this be stiled his emptying himself of glory, or humbling himself, in that sense in which the Apostle expresses it, as above mentioned. It cannot be denied, but that Christ's incarnation was the highest instance of condescension; and, if nothing more be intended than this, when persons speak of Christ's humbling himself in his incarnation, or taking our nature into union with his divine, we are far from denying it.

But we are not now speaking of Christ's humbling himself, in a relative sense, as God, but his being in a state of humiliation, as God-man, Mediator; in which sense, the act of incarnation, or taking the human nature into union with his divine Person, cannot, properly speaking, be stiled a branch of his mediatorial humiliation; for that which tends to constitute the Person of the Mediator, cannot be said to belong to him as Mediator. For the understanding of which, we may observe,

1. That the Person of Christ is to be consider'd in two different respects, *viz.* as God, or as Mediator; in the former sense, he was, from eternity, a divine Person, and would have been so, if he had not been Mediator: But when we speak of his Person, as Media-

^e *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσας.*

^f *Psal. cxiii. 6.*

tor, we always consider him as God-man^e.

2. Every mediatorial act^h, according to the most proper and literal sense thereof, supposes the constitution of his Person, as God-man Mediator, and consequently it supposes him to be incarnate. This is evident, because what he did here on earth was perform'd by him, in obedience to, and as having received a commission from the Father, which could not be perform'd any otherwise than in his human nature.

3. Christ could not be said to assume the human nature into union with his divine Person, as God-man, for that implies a contradiction in terms; nor could it be said, that, before this, he performed any act of obedience to the law, for that supposes the human nature to be assumed, and therefore is consequent to his incarnation.

4. For our farther understanding this matter, we may distinguish between the act of incarnation, or taking the human nature into union with his divine Person; and the state in which he was, after this. The former was an instance of divine condescension; the latter, in the most proper sense, was a branch of his mediatorial humiliation. And this leads us to consider the various instances in which Christ is said to have humbled himself, in some following *Answers*, namely, in his birth, life, death, and after his death.

I. Christ humbled himself in his birth; and that,

1. In that he submitted to be in a state of infancy, in common with all, who come into the world. This is the most unactive state of life, in which we are under a natural incapacity of enjoying, or conversing with God, or being of any other use, than objectively, to men, inasmuch as the new-born infant is destitute, at least, of the regular exercise of thought; and is also exposed to various evils, that attend its infantile state; sensible of a

great deal of pain and uneasiness, which renders it the object of compassion; and knows not what is the secret cause thereof, nor how to seek redress. This stage of life our Saviour pass'd through, and thereby discover'd a great degree of humiliation.

We have no reason to think, with the Papistsⁱ, that, during his infancy, he had the perfect exercise of his reasoning powers, as though he had been in a state of manhood, as supposing that the contrary would have been a dishonour to him. For, if it were in no wise unbecoming the divine nature to continue its union with his body, when separate from his soul, and therefore in a state of the greatest inactivity, it could be no dishonour for it to be united to his human nature, though we suppose it to have been, during his infancy, in that state, in which other infants are, as having the powers and faculties of the soul not deduced into act, as they afterwards are; therefore we can reckon this no other than a groundless and unnecessary conjecture, and cannot but admire this instance of his humiliation, while he was an infant. And, indeed, since he came to redeem infants, as well as others, it was becoming the wisdom and goodness of God, that he should be like them, in most other respects, except in their being born guilty of *Adam's* sin. If his passing through the other ages of life was designed for our advantage, as he was therein like unto us, and, as the Apostle says, able to sympathize with us, in the various miseries that attend them; so this affords the like argument for that peculiar compassion, which he has for infants, under those evils that they are liable to.

What we have here asserted, against those who think it a dishonour to him, to suppose, that he was liable to any imperfection, as to knowledge, during his infancy, is not to be reckon'd a groundless conjecture, without sufficient reason to support it; since it is expressly said, in scripture, in *Luke ii. 52.* that he in-

^e When we consider Christ as Mediator, from all eternity, we include, in this *Idea*, his human nature, as what was to be assumed in time. There is a *Prolepsis* in such a mode of speaking; as, when he is said to be *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; in the same sense he might be said to be man, from the foundation of the world; and so we understand it, when we speak of him as God-man Mediator, from all eternity.

^h By Christ's mediatorial acts, we mean every thing that he did and suffer'd, in the whole course of his obedience, unto death: This is not to be consider'd in a *Proleptic* sense, as what he did as Mediator, before his incarnation, may be said to be, as he might then, in some respects, be said to execute his prophetic or kingly offices, as Mediator, or as one who designed, in the fulness of time, to take our nature into union with his divine Person.

ⁱ See *Bellarmin.* Tom. I. Lib. IV. cap. 1. who pretends that it is universally held by them, when he says, *Catholicorum communis sententia fuit, Christi animam ab ipsa sua creatione repletam scientia & gratia; ita ut nihil postea didicerit quod antea nesciret, nec ullam actionem fecerit aut facere potuerit qua emendatione egerit. Ita docent cum magistro omnes Theologi & etiam omnes Patres.* This he endeavours to maintain by arguments, which I shall not enter into the particular account of.

482 CHRIST *humiliated in his Parentage, Place of Birth, and Abode.*

creased in wisdom, as well as *stature*; therefore we suppose, that Christ's humiliation began in those natural infirmities, which he was liable to, that are inseparable from a state of infancy.

2. Another branch of Christ's humiliation, respecting his birth, was, that he should be born of a woman of very low degree in the world, rather than of one whose circumstances and character therein were superior to those of all others, and called for an equal degree of respect from them. The blessed virgin was, indeed, in a spiritual sense, honoured and favoured above all women, as the salutation given her, by the angel, imports, *Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women*^k; notwithstanding, 'tis plain she was far from being honourable in the opinion of the world. 'Tis true, she was of the seed of *David*, which was a princely line: But the sceptre was now departed from it; therefore, when our Saviour is said to *have the throne of his father David*^l, given him by God, 'tis certain he had it not from his parents, in a political sense. 'Tis called, indeed, *The throne of David*, as referring to that promise made to *David*^m, that one should descend from him, whom God would *set on his throne, whose kingdom he would establish for ever*. What relates to the establishment of *David's* kingdom, and the eternity of it, certainly looks farther than the reign of *Solomon*, or the succession of kings, who were of that line; so that *David's* kingdom continuing for ever, denotes the perpetuity thereof, in Christ's being set, in a spiritual sense, on his throne, which seems to be the meaning of the angel's words, *He shall sit on the throne of his father David*. He had not, indeed, a right to *David's* crown by natural descent from him, for that seems contrary to what was foretold of him; for though it is said, that *a rod shall come of the stem of Jesse, and a branch grow out of his roots*ⁿ, which plainly refers to our Saviour, as being of the seed of *David*; yet it is as plainly intimated, that he was not to inherit the crown of *David*, in a political sense, by right of natural descent from him, inasmuch as it is said, *He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground*^o.

To this we may add; that his mother's condition in the world appears to have

been very low, in that she was treated with an uncommon degree of neglect, as it is particularly remarked^p, designing to set forth our Saviour's humiliation in his birth, that *she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn*. No room, because his mother was poor, and therefore was treated in such a manner; better accommodations were reserved for others, who, at that time, in which there was great resort to *Bethlehem*, were better able to satisfy the mercenary demands of those, at whose house they lodged.

As for *Joseph*, his reputed father, he was not one of the great men of this world, but lived by his industry, his occupation being that of a *carpenter*^q. This was sometimes objected against our Saviour, by his enemies, who did not consider, that the mean condition of his parents was a part of that state of humiliation, which he was to pass through, in discharging the work for which he came into the world, and plainly discover'd, that he cast the utmost contempt on all the external pomp and grandeur thereof, and thought no honours worthy of his receiving, but such as were of a spiritual nature.

3. There is another circumstance of humiliation, taken from the places of our Saviour's birth and residence. He was born in *Bethlehem*, a city, which, though once esteemed honourable when *David* dwelt there; yet, at this time, it was reckoned, by the *Jews*, not as one of the principal cities of *Judah*. The prophet *Micah* styles it, *Little among the thousands of Judah*^r: But as for the place of his abode, *Nazareth*, that was despised, even to a proverb; so that the *Jews* reckoned, that nothing good or great could come from thence. Thus *Nathaniel* speaks their common sense, when he says, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth*^s? And this was afterwards improved against him, as an argument that he was no Prophet; when the *Jews* say, not concerning this place alone, but the whole country, in which it was, to wit, *Galilee*, *Out of it ariseth no prophet*^t. And this is expressly intimated, as a design of providence, that it should be a part of his humiliation, as it is said, *He dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene*^u;

^k Luke i. 28.

^l Chap. i. 32.

^m 2 Sam. vii. 12—16.

ⁿ Isai. xi. 1.

^o Chap. liii. 2.

^p Luke ii. 7.

^q Matt. xiii. 55.

^r Micah v. 2.

^s John i. 46.

^t Chap. vii. 52.

^u Matt. ii. 23.

CHRIST made under the Law, expos'd to Indignities from Men. 483

by which we are not to understand, that any of the prophets foretold this in express words, as having particular reference to the place where he lived: But the meaning is, that as the prophets, with one consent, spake of him, as being in a most low and humble state, so this was a particular instance hereof; and, in that respect, what was spoken by them, concerning his state of humiliation, in various instances, was fulfilled in this^{*}.

II. Christ's state of humiliation appear'd throughout his whole life, and that in several instances.

I. In his subjecting himself to the law; and accordingly he was under an obligation to yield obedience to God in every thing that was required of him, during the whole course of his life. This, indeed, was the necessary result of his incarnation; so that he no sooner became man, but he was under a law, which no creature is, or can be, exempted from. Nevertheless, it was so far founded on his own consent, as he consented to be incarnate, which was certainly an instance of infinite condescension; and his being, in pursuance thereof, actually made under the law, was a branch of his mediatorial humiliation.

(1.) He was made under the law, that is, he was obliged to obey the precepts thereof; and that not only of the moral law, which, as to some of its precepts, the best of creatures are under a natural obligation to yield obedience to; but, besides this, there were several positive laws, which he submitted to yield obedience to, in common with those he came to redeem, which obligation he perfectly fulfilled, as it is observed in what he says to *John the Baptist*, *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*^y, *q. d.* it becometh me, in common with all mankind, to yield perfect obedience to the law; and elsewhere he speaks of himself, as coming into the world *to fulfil the law*^z. And we may observe, that it was not one single act, but a course of obedience, that he perform'd, during his whole life, as it is said, in this *Answer*, he per-

fectly fulfilled the law, which is agreeable to that sinless perfection, which is ascribed to him in scripture.

(2.) He was made under the law, that is, he was subject to the curse thereof, that was due to us for sin; which is called, by divines, the maledictory part of it; as it is said, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*^a: As he obey'd what the law enjoin'd, so he suffer'd what it threaten'd, as a punishment due to us for sin.

2. Our Saviour conflicted with the indignities of the world. When he was an infant, *Herod sought his life*; and, had not his parents been *warned by God*, to flee into another country, he had been slain, as well as the children that were barbarously murther'd in *Bethlehem*^b: But he was most persecuted, and met with the greatest indignities, after he appear'd publicly in the world; for before that time, till he was about thirty years of age, it might be reckoned a part of his humiliation, that he was not much known therein, and was, at least, a considerable part of that time dependent on, and subject to his parents. 'Tis true, he did not then meet with much opposition from the *Jews*, while they were in expectation that he would appear as an earthly monarch, and deliver them from the *Roman* yoke: But when their expectation hereof was frustrated, and they saw nothing in him but what was agreeable to his state of humiliation, they were offended; and, from that time, the greatest injuries and indignities were offer'd to him, as will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That they did not own his glory as the Son of God, nor see and adore his deity, that was united to the human nature, when, being made flesh, he dwelt among us; and therefore it is observed, that though *the world was made by him*, *the world knew him not*^c; or, as the Apostle says, concerning him, (for so the words may be render'd) *Whom none of the princes of this world knew*^d: They knew, or owned him not to be the Lord of glory; and, as they knew him not, so they desired not to know him; therefore the

^{*} This seems to be a better sense of the text, than what is given by some, who suppose, that it was an accomplishment of what was foretold, by the prophets, concerning his being *Netzer*, the Branch, in *Isai. xi. 1.* *Jer. xxiii. 5.* *Zech. vi. 12.* for that refers to his being of the seed of *David*, and not to the place of his abode; so that he could not be called the Branch, because he dwelt in *Nazareth*. Others suppose, he is so called from *Nazir*, which signifies, in its application, one that dwelt in *Nazareth*, and, in its derivation, one that is separated, and that either to God, as the *Nazarites* were of old, or from men, by some peculiar marks of infamy, or reproach, cast upon him, as *Joseph* is said to have been, in *Gen. xlix. 26.* *separate from his brethren*. These do, in effect, assert the same thing that we have observed, *viz.* that it is the concurrent sense of all the prophets, that he should be in a low and humble state, of which his residing in *Nazareth* was a particular instance.

^y *Matt. iii. 15.*

^z *Chap. v. 17.*

^a *Gal. iii. 13.*

^b *Matt. ii. 13.*

^c *John i. 10.*

^d *1 Cor. ii. 8.*

484 CHRIST *conflicted with the Temptations of Satan.*

prophet says, *We bid, as it were, our faces from him*^e.

(2.) They question'd his mission, denied him to be the Christ, tho' this truth had been confirm'd by so many incontestable miracles: This is that unbelief which the *Jews* are so often charged with. Thus when they come to him, and tell him, *How long dost thou make us to doubt? tell us plainly, whether thou be the Christ or no?* To which he replies, *I told you, and ye believed not*, and appeals to the *works which he did in his Father's name*^f; which, one would think, were a sufficient evidence thereof: But yet they were obstinate and harden'd in unbelief; and not only so, but,

(3.) They reproached him, as though he wrought miracles by the power of the devil, which was the most malicious and groundless slander that could be invented, as though *Satan's kingdom* had been *divided against it self*, or he would empower a person to work miracles, as a means to promote the interest of God, and thereby to weaken his own, as our Saviour justly replies to that charge^g. And, indeed, they knew, in their own consciences, that this was a false accusation, and hereby sinned against the greatest light, and fullest conviction; which occasioned him to denounce that terrible and awful threatening against them, that this *sin should never be forgiven them, neither in this world, nor in the world to come*.

(4.) They reproached him as to his moral character, for no other reason, but because he conversed, in a free and friendly manner, with his people, and went about doing them good. If he, at any time, accepted of the least common instances of kindness, or conversed with sinful men, with a design to promote their spiritual advantage, they revile him for it: Thus he says, *The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners*^h.

(5.) It was a matter of common discourse amongst them, that he was a deceiver of the people, though the evidence of truth shone like a sun-beam in every thing that he said and did: Thus 'tis said, *There was much murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people*ⁱ.

(6.) Sometimes they were uneasy at his presence, and desirous to be rid of him and his ministry. Thus the *Gergesenes*, because they had suffer'd a little damage in the loss of their swine, unanimously besought him to depart out of their coasts^k: Thus they knew not their own privilege, but were weary of him, who was a publick and universal blessing to the world.

(7.) Many refused to give him entertainment in their houses, or to treat him with that civility, which a common traveller expects; which occasioned him to complain, that *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*^l.

(8.) At some times, even before his last sufferings and crucifixion, they attempted to take away his life, and thereby expressed the greatest degree of ingratitude and hatred of him. Their attempts, indeed, were to no purpose, because his hour was not yet come: Thus, when he had asserted his divine glory, they not only charged him with blasphemy, but took up stones to stone him^m; and even his fellow-citizens, among whom he had been brought up, and to whom he usually read and expounded the scripture, on the sabbath days; these not only thrust him out of the city, but led him to the brow of an hill, designing to put him to death, by casting him down from it, but he passed through the midst of them, and, for the present, escaped their bloody design: This was a more aggravated crime, as it was committed by those who were under peculiar obligations to himⁿ. Thus he endured, not only, as the Apostle says, *the contradiction of sinners against himself*^o, but the most ungrateful and injurious treatment from those, to whom he had been so great a friend, which still enhaunced his sufferings; so that, during his whole life, he might be said to have been, as the prophet stiles him, *A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*^p.

3. Our Saviour conflicted with the temptations of Satan: Thus it is said, *He was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin*^q; or, *He suffer'd being tempted*^r; though we are not to understand by his being, in all points, tempted, like as we are, that he had any temptations arising in his own soul, as we have, from the corruption of our nature; for this would have been inconsistent with his perfect holiness; and therefore

^e Isai. liii. 3.

^f Matt. viii. 34.

^g Heb. xii. 3.

^h John x. 24—26.

ⁱ Chap. viii. 20.

^j Isai. liii. 3.

^k Matt. xii. 24—26.

^l John viii. 59.

^m Heb. iv. 15.

ⁿ Chap. xi. 19.

^o Luke iv. 16. compared with 29, 30.

^p Chap. ii. 18.

^q John vii. 12.

what the Apostle says concerning us, that *every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*^t, is, by no means, applicable to him; but that he was tempted by Satan, is very evident, from scripture. Some think, that Satan was let loose upon him, and suffer'd to express his utmost malice against him, and to practise all those usual methods whereby he endeavours to ensnare mankind, in two remarkable seasons of his life, namely, in his first entrance on his publick ministry, and immediately before his last sufferings; the former of these none deny; the latter some think we have ground to conclude from his own words, in which he says, *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*^t; where it seems, that by the *prince of this world*, he means the devil, inasmuch as he is so called elsewhere^u, as well as *the God of this world*^x, and *the prince of the power of the air*^y. If this be the sense of our Saviour's words, *The prince of this world cometh*, it is as if he should say, I expect that, together with my other sufferings, I shall be exposed to the last and most violent efforts that Satan will make. As he assaulted me when I first enter'd on my publick ministry, so he will do it now I am about to close my work on earth: Then he endeavoured to ensnare me with his wiles; now he will endeavour to make me uneasy with his fiery darts. This was, as it were, *the hour* of the powers of darkness; and we may suppose, that if they were suffer'd, they would attempt to discourage our Saviour, by representing to him the formidableness of the death of the cross, the insupportableness of the wrath of God due to sin, and how much it was his interest to take some method to save himself from those evils that were impending: Thus we may suppose, that our Saviour apprehends the tempter as coming; but we may observe he says, *he hath nothing in me*, that is, no corrupt nature, that shall make me receptive of any impressions, arising from his temptations. His fiery darts, though pointed and directed against me, shall be as darts shot against a rock, into which they cannot enter, but are immediately repelled.

But since some think, that by *the prince of this world*, our Saviour does not mean the devil, any otherwise than as he instigated his persecutors to accuse, condemn, and crucify him; and that this is most agreeable to the words immediately fore-

going, *Hereafter I will not talk much with you, q. d.* I have not much time to converse with you; for he who will betray me, and those that are sent to apprehend me, are ready to come: I must, in a very little time, be accused and tried, and, as the consequence hereof, condemned, though they will find nothing in me worthy of death; I say, since it is question'd, whether this be not as probable a sense of this text, as that above mentioned, and therefore that this cannot be reckoned an instance of Christ's temptation, which was more immediately from Satan, we shall pass it over, and proceed to consider that conflict, which, without doubt, he underwent with the devil, in his first entrance on his publick ministry.

This we read of in *Matt. iv. 1—11.* and *Luke iv. 1—13.* And, because there is a small difference between these two Evangelists, in the account they give of this matter, from whence the enemies of divine revelation take occasion to reproach it, as though it were inconsistent with it self, we shall briefly consider and vindicate it from this calumny. We may observe, that *Matthew* says, *When he had fasted forty days, the tempter came to him*; whereas *Luke* says, *He was forty days tempted of the devil*; and *Mark* speaks to the same purpose^z. *Matthew* seems to speak of his temptations as at *the end of the forty days*; the other two Evangelists intimate, that he was tempted, more or less, all the forty days. There is no contradiction between these two accounts; *Luke* only adds a circumstance which *Matthew* omits, to wit, that Satan assaulted him with various temptations, all the time he was in the wilderness; whereas these, which are recorded by both the Evangelists, were towards the end of the forty days.

Again, *Matthew*, speaking concerning the first of these temptations, introduces the devil, as saying to our Saviour, *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*; whereas *Luke* speaks but of one stone; *Command that this stone be made bread*. This seeming contradiction may easily be reconciled, by considering, that by these *stones* in *Matthew*, may be meant one of these stones, which is a very common hebraism; as when 'tis said, that *Jonah was gone down to the sides of the ship*^a, that is, one of the sides; and elsewhere 'tis said, that, when Christ was upon the cross, the *thieves*, which were

^t James i. 14.
^{i.} 13.

^t John xiv. 30.
^a Jonah i. 5.

^u Chap. xii. 31.

^x 2 Cor. iv. 4.

^y Eph. ii. 2.

^z Mark

486 *Of the Time and Place of CHRIST's Temptations.*

crucified with him, reviled him^b; which hebraism *Luke* explains, when he says, *One of the malefactors* railed on him^c. So, in this temptation, Satan pointing at some large stone, tempted him to turn it into bread; and *Matthew* intends no more, when he says, *Command that these stones, that is, one of them, be made bread.*

Again, we observe another difference in the account given by *Matthew*, from that given by *Luke*, respecting the order of the temptations. *Matthew* speaks of Satan's tempting him to *fall down and worship him*, as the third and last temptation, which, as it is more than probable, it was; but *Luke*, inverting the order, lays down this temptation in the second place. However, there is no contradiction between these two; for the credit of an historian is not weakened, provided he relate matters of fact, though he does not, in every circumstance, observe the order in which things were done, especially when nothing material depends upon it; so that, upon the whole, the difference between the account of these two Evangelists, is so inconsiderable, that 'tis needless to say any thing farther on that head. We shall therefore proceed to consider Christ's temptation, as we find it there recorded. And,

1. We may observe the time in which he was exposed thereunto, to wit, immediately after his baptism, when he first enter'd on his publick ministry, having but just before received a glorious testimony, by a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*^d; upon which it is said, *Then was he led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil*; or, as *Mark* farther explains it, *Immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness*^e. From whence we may take occasion to infer,

(1.) That God's children have reason to expect, in conformity to Christ their Head, that, after extraordinary manifestations of divine love, they may sometimes meet with great temptations; so that, as grace is excited by the one, it may be exercised, tried, and the truth thereof more plainly evinced by the other; and, indeed, in us, there is a particular reason for it, which was not applicable to our Saviour, namely, that, after great honours confer'd upon us, when God is pleased to manifest himself to us, we may be kept, as the Apostle says,

concerning himself, on the like occasion, from being *exalted above measure*^f.

(2.) We may, from hence, observe, how Satan shews his malice and envy against God's people, so that, when they are raised nearest to heaven, he will use his utmost endeavours to bring them down to hell; and hereby he shews his opposition to God, by attempting to rob him of that glory, which he designs to bring to himself, by these extraordinary manifestations, as well as his people, of the blessed fruits and effects thereof, whereby he thinks to counter-act what God is doing for them.

(3.) As our Saviour was tempted just before his entrance on his publick ministry, we learn, from hence; that when God designs that his people shall engage in any great, useful, and difficult work, they are like to meet with great temptations, which God suffers, that he may put them upon being on their watch, and fortify them against many other temptations, which they may expect to meet with, in the discharge thereof. Many instances of this we have in scripture; particularly in *Moses*, when called to go into the land of *Egypt*^g; and the prophet *Jeremiah*, when sent to a *people, whose faces he was afraid of*^h, Satan suggested several unwarrantable excuses, to discourage them from undertaking the work to which they were called.

2. The next thing to be observed is, the place in which Christ was exposed to these conflicts with the tempter, namely, the *wilderness*. It is not our business to enquire what wilderness it was, whether one of the smaller wildernesses in the land of *Judea*, or the great wilderness on the other side *Jordan*, since the scripture is silent as to this matter; though the latter seems more probable, since there are higher mountains in it than in the other; and we read, that that wilderness, in which Christ was tempted, had in it an exceeding high mountain, from whence the devil shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. There was in that wilderness mount *Nebo*, from the top whereof *Moses* took a view of the whole land of *Canaan*: But, passing by the consideration of the particular wilderness, in which Christ was tempted, we shall only observe, that the place which providence designed for this conflict was a wilderness.

(1.) That he might fast during the

^b Matt. xxvii. 44.
^c Exod. iv. 1, 10, 13.

^d Luke xxiii. 39.
^e Jer. i. 6, 8.

^f Matt. iii. 17.

^g Mark i. 12.

^h 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Some general Remarks on CHRIST's three Temptations. 487

time of his being there, that being a place destitute of necessary food: And this was order'd by providence, not only as a particular instance of his humiliation, but that Satan might, from hence, take occasion to suit one of his temptations to his condition, as being an hungred.

(2.) Another reason was, that being separate from all his friends and acquaintance, he might be neither help'd nor hinder'd by them, that so Satan might have the greatest advantage he could desire against him, as solitude is a state most adapted to temptations; and consequently that his affliction herein, and the victory he should obtain, should be more remarkable: As none was with him to offer him any assistance, so none could take occasion to claim a part in his triumph over the adversary.

As to what is said, in the text, concerning his being *led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted*, we humbly conceive that it is the Holy Spirit who is there intended, as the words seem to import; for it would not be so proper to say, He was led by the impure spirit, the devil, to be tempted of the devil; and *Luke* says, that, *being full of the Holy Ghost, he was led by the Spirit*, that is, the Holy Ghost, with whom he was filled, *into the wilderness*ⁱ. Besides this, it doth not seem agreeable to the holiness of Christ, to suppose, that he went into the wilderness at the motion and instigation of the devil; for that would have been an unjustifiable action. We may lawfully go, in the way of temptation, when providence leads us there; but it is not lawful for us to go within the verge of Satan's temptations, by his own instigation. And this seems farther probable, inasmuch as 'tis said, that, *after the devil was departed from him, he returned in, or by the power of, the Spirit, into Galilee*^k. If he returned by the power of the Holy Spirit out of the wilderness, have we not equal ground to conclude that he was led by him into it at first.

But if it be said, that he did not go into the wilderness by the instigation of the devil, but was carried thither with violence by him: though this would clear our Saviour from the guilt of going by the devil's persuasion in the way of temptation; yet we can hardly allow that God would suffer the devil to have so much power over Christ's body, as to carry him where he pleased, by a violent motion.

If it be replied to this, that the devil might as well be said to carry him into the wilderness, as to take him up into the holy city, and set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, by a violent motion; in which sense some understand that passage in the second temptation, wherein 'tis said, that the devil did so, in *Ver. 5*. what answer may be given to this, will appear from what may farther be said, when we speak to this temptation in particular.

3. We shall now consider the three temptations, mentioned in this scripture, which he was exposed to. And that,

(1.) More generally; and accordingly we may observe,

1st. That the two first of them were very subtil; so that some would hardly have discerned wherein the sin lay, had he complied with them; but that will be consider'd under a following *Head*. We need only remark, at present, that herein he acted like a deceiver, and appear'd to be, as he is elsewhere called, *The old serpent*. In the third temptation, he openly discover'd his own vileness, and blasphemously usurped that glory which is due to God alone, when he tempted our Saviour to fall down and worship him.

2^{dly}. In these temptations, he insinuates, that some advantage would accrue to our Saviour from his compliance therewith. This he generally does when he tempts us, wherein he makes an overture of some advantage which we shall gain by our compliance. The advantage he proposed, by the first temptation, was, that hereby he might prevent his starving with hunger. By the second, he proposed, that he might gain popular applause, by casting himself down from the temple, among the people that were walking near it, that they might admire him for this wonderful action; and, in both these temptations, he urges him to give a proof of his being the Son of God, by which means his doctrine might be more readily received. In the third temptation, indeed, the advantage is altogether carnal, and such as, had Satan consider'd the holiness of the Person he was speaking to, and his contempt of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof, he might easily have supposed that our Saviour would have despised the overture, as well as abhor'd the action.

3^{dly}. We may observe, that, in the second temptation, the devil refers to a

ⁱ Luke iv. 1.

^k Ver. 14.

promise contain'd in scripture, and so puts him upon that which carries in it the appearance of duty, namely, his depending upon the divine protection, in expectation that God would give his angels charge over him: But he quotes the scripture fallaciously, by leaving out a very material thing contained in it, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways*¹; whereby it is implied, that none have a right to depend on the divine protection, but they who are in the way of duty, which Christ would not have been, had he complied with this temptation.

⁴^{thly}. Another thing we observe is, that our Saviour not only refused to comply with the temptation, in all these three instances, but he assigned a reason of his refusal, whereby it appears that he did this with judgment; and hereby we are instructed not only to refuse to comply with Satan's temptations, but we should be able to give a reason of our refusal. And, as we farther observe, that our Saviour answers all these temptations, by referring to scripture, which he adhered to, as a rule to direct his conduct, and therein expressed the greatest deference to it; so he teaches us to do the same, as the Psalmist says, *By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer*^m; it is by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that we quench all the fiery darts of the wickedⁿ.

(2.) We shall now proceed to consider the three temptations in particular, together with our Saviour's answer to each of them, and that in the order in which they are related by the Evangelist Matthew, in Chap. iv.

First, The first temptation was, that he would prove his being the Son of God, by commanding stones to be made bread. The subtilty of this temptation consists,

1. In that it seem'd to be not only lawful, but necessary, for Christ, on some occasions, to give a proof that he was the Son of God; and his working miracles was the way by which this was to be done. And it would not seem, to some, unlawful for him to work a miracle, in turning stones into bread, since we read, among other miracles, of his multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude; therefore why may he not produce bread, in a miraculous manner, as well now, as at any other time?

2. Satan puts him upon working this miracle, from a principle of self-preser-

vation, which is a duty founded in the law of nature, to supply himself with necessary food, being an hungred; and, if it was lawful for him to produce bread to feed others, was it not lawful to do the same for his own subsistence, especially since he was in a place in which food was not to be obtained by any other means?

3. He pretends to have a great concern for our Saviour's welfare, that so he might not perish with hunger: Thus he thought to gain an advantage over him, by a pretence of friendship, as he often does in those temptations he offers to us, to promote our own welfare by unlawful means.

Let us now consider wherein the snare lay, which our Saviour was thoroughly appriz'd of, and in what respects he would have sinned, had he complied with this temptation. This will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That it was not lawful for him to work a miracle, to gratify the devil; and that for this reason in particular, because it would have been contrary to the general end and design of his working miracles, which was only for the advantage of his people, who are the proper subjects of conviction thereby; for him to work them with any other design, would have been to prostitute a sacred ordinance, or to apply it to one to whom it did not belong. When *the woman of Canaan* came to him, beseeching him to work a miracle, in casting the devil out of her daughter; she being not a member of the Jewish church, or one of *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, our Saviour tells her, *It is not meet to take the childrens bread and cast it unto dogs*; and that he was not sent but unto *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*^o; that is, he was only to work miracles for the conviction of those who were the proper subjects thereof; and, doubtless, he would not have wrought this miracle at her request, had she not been a proper subject of conviction, which she was, as an elect person, though not by nature an *Israelite*. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, the devil was not a subject of conviction, and therefore Christ was not obliged to prove himself the Son of God to him; for which reason he would have sinned, had he complied with this temptation.

(2.) Had it been otherwise, it doth not seem necessary, at this time, for him to prove himself to be the Son of God, since

¹ Psal. xci. 11.

^m Psal. xvii. 4.

ⁿ Eph. vi. 16, 17.

^o Matt. xv. 24, 26.

CHRIST, *resists the first Temptation, is exposed to a second* 489

that had, but a little before, been sufficiently attested, by a voice from heaven; and therefore to work a miracle to confirm it at present, would argue a kind of disbelief of that testimony.

(3.) For Christ to work a miracle for his own subsistence, seems disagreeable to the main design of his working miracles, which, as was before hinted, was his people's conviction that he was the *Messiah*; and therefore it does not sufficiently appear that he ever provided for the necessities of himself, or his family, in such a way^p. But suppose he had, at any time, subsisted himself by working a miracle, it would have argued a distrust of the providence of God to have supplied his hunger, at present, that way; as though God, who had hitherto preserved him without food, could not have continued so to do, as long as he was in the wilderness. And it would also have been contrary to one design of his being led there by the Spirit; which was, that he might humble himself by fasting, as well as conflict with Satan's temptations. Thus concerning the first temptation that was offer'd by the devil.

Let us now consider Christ's answer to it. This is contained in *Ver. 4. It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* The scripture here refer'd to, is in *Deut. viii. 3.* where we have the very same words; which, as they are applied by our Saviour to refell this temptation, imply in them two things:

1st. That man hath a better life to secure, than that which is maintained by bread, to wit, the life of the soul: Thus 'tis said, *A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*^q. If we take it in this sense, it is as though he should say, If I comply with this temptation, I should sin against my own soul; and, by using unlawful means to support my natural life, should lose that spiritual life, which consists in the divine favour; or rather the meaning is,

2^{dly}. That it is by the word of God's

power that our lives are upheld, which power, though it be ordinarily exerted in the use of means, by applying that proper food, which God gives us; yet this power can sustain us without it, when we are called, in an extraordinary manner by him, to depend upon it, and have ground to conclude, as our Saviour now had, that our dependance should not be in vain. Hitherto he had depended upon it, for almost forty days, since he first was brought into the wilderness, and therefore he concluded, that it was his duty to exercise the same dependance, so long as he was there.

Secondly, The second temptation was that, in which Satan endeavour'd to persuade him to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, expecting that God would preserve him safe from danger; pretending that *he would give his angels charge concerning him, and in their hands they should bear him up, lest, at any time, he should dash his foot against a stone.* This was a snare laid, by the subtil adversary, for his life; and herein we may observe,

1. That as, in the former temptation, he solicited him to distrust the providence of God; and our Saviour's reply to it, contains an intimation of his firm resolution to depend upon it, for his farther preservation, though without the necessary food of life; now he tempts him, since he is resolved to depend on the power and providence of God, to do it, in an unlawful way, which is no other than a presuming on the divine protection, without a sufficient warrant.

2. He tempts him to the sin of self-murder, which would be the consequence of his presumption; for, if providence did not preserve him, which he had not sufficient ground to conclude that it would, when engaged in an unlawful action, such, as throwing himself down from the temple would have been, this certainly would have proved his death. And the tempter had something farther than this in view, namely, to put a stop to the work of our redemption, and defeat

^p Some ancient and modern writers have supposed, that our Saviour provided for the necessities of his parents in a miraculous way; but the argument, which they bring to prove this, is not sufficiently conclusive; namely, that when he wrought his first publick miracle, in Cana of Galilee, mentioned in *John ii.* his mother desired him to work a miracle to supply them at the marriage-feast with wine, *Ver. 3.* which, they suppose, she would never have thought of, had he not, some time before this, wrought miracles in private to supply her necessities, or provide food for her family: But this does not follow, from her desiring him to do it now, since she might know, that, when he was enter'd on his publick ministry, he was to work miracles; and therefore desired him, on this occasion, to put forth the first instance of his divine power therein. Again, this is said to be the *beginning of miracles which he did in Cana of Galilee, Ver. 11.* and, probably, the first miracle that he wrought in any place; and, indeed, his reply to her, when she desired that he would work this miracle, seems to imply, that he had never wrought miracles to provide for her family, when he says, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* *q. d.* my working miracles is no part of that obedience which I owe to thee, nor art thou to expect any private advantage thereby; for these are to be wrought with another view.

^{ex} Luke xii. 15.

490 *The Matter of CHRIST's second Temptation explain'd.*

the great design of Christ's coming into the world; for, if he had died this way, by his own hands, he would have contracted guilt, and brought a dishonour to the divine name, rather than have given satisfaction to divine justice, and finished the work he was sent into the world about.

3. In this, Satan tempts him also to a vain-glorious, and fruitless action, which was far from answering any valuable end: His throwing himself down from the top of the temple, among the people, who were gather'd together in that publick place of resort, might, 'tis true, have amused them, when seeing a person flying thro' the air; but it would not have been an expedient to confirm their faith, since there was no explicit appeal to this miracle for the confirmation of any contested doctrine, and therefore it would have contradicted the general design of his working miracles, and, in that respect, been unlawful. Had he been, indeed, at this time, at the bottom of the temple, disputing with the *Jews* about his mission, and offering to confirm it, by such a miracle as they should chuse; and, had they insisted on it, that he should go up to the top of the temple, and cast himself down amongst them, and signified that this miracle should decide the controversy, for their conviction, I don't apprehend that it would have been unlawful for him to have done it; nor would it have been an instance of presumption for him, to expect the divine protection in so doing. But the case was otherwise circumstanced at present; the devil, who was assaulting him in the wilderness (as was before observed) was no proper subject of conviction; and none of his people were present, to desire that this miracle should be wrought, that they might believe.

Having thus consider'd the matter of the second temptation in general, it may not be amiss for us to enquire into the meaning of those words, in *Ver. 5.* which are generally consider'd, as preparatory to it: Thus 'tis said, *The devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.* The most common opinion, of those who give their sense of this scripture, is, that the devil had power over the body of Christ, to carry it from place to place, which they reckon not to be an improbable supposition, from the account that some give, who write on the subject of witchcraft, of persons being so carried by him in a preter-

natural way: But these relations have not much weight in them; and many persons of judgment question the truth thereof; but whether they be true or false, it makes nothing for this purpose, for which they are brought. We do not question but that the devil, by divine permission, might carry persons, by a violent motion, from place to place; but whether our Saviour was carried by him from the wilderness to the top of the temple, is the question to be debated. They, who suppose this to have been really done, either think that Christ went there together with, and at the instigation of the devil, without any thing preter-natural in his being convey'd there by him; or else that the devil carried him there from the wilderness through the air; the latter of which is the most commonly received opinion: But we cannot see sufficient reason to acquiesce in either of them.

(1.) As to the former of these opinions, I cannot think it lawful for our Saviour to go from the wilderness to the temple at the instigation of the devil, for that would be to go in the way of temptation, without a divine warrant. Had the Spirit of God carried him thither, and encouraged him to throw himself down from thence, it had been his duty to have done it, as much as it was to abide in the wilderness, being led there by the Holy Spirit: But as it would have been unlawful for him to come into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, so it would have been no less unlawful to go from thence to the temple, at his desire.

Moreover, it may be greatly question'd, whether our Saviour was fit to take so long a journey, as from the wilderness to the temple, after he had fasted forty days, and, it may be, his strength impaired thereby. And, indeed, when we read of his return out of the wilderness into his own country, it was by the power of the Spirit, which supplied his want of strength for so great a journey; therefore, as his coming there was by the Spirit, his safe conduct back again was by the same Spirit. And we can't suppose that he went out of the wilderness till the Spirit carried him out into his own country; therefore it does not appear that he went to the temple by the solicitation of the devil, to be tempted by him there, and afterwards returned to the wilderness, to submit to his last temptation.

(2.) We cannot altogether give into

A farther Explication of CHRIST's second Temptation. 491

the other opinion, which, as was before observed, is the most common, namely, that the devil was permitted to carry our Saviour through the air, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, which seems to be the more direct and literal sense of the words of the Evangelist, relating to this matter; for the following reasons.

1st. The pinnacle of the temple, upon which the devil is supposed to have set our Saviour, was, as some writers observe, the sharp point, or *apex*, or extremity of a cone, on which it was not possible for the smallest bird to perch; therefore a man could not stand upon it, and consequently Christ could not be said to be set upon it.

To this, 'tis true, 'tis generally replied, that by his being set on a pinnacle of the temple, is meant his being set upon one of the battlements, near one of the spires of the temple, on which men may conveniently stand. Here they suppose the devil placed our Saviour, and then tempted him to cast himself down from thence. But suppose this be sufficient to account for those words that speak of Christ's being set on a pinnacle of the temple, and so enervates the force of this reason against it, let it be farther consider'd,

2^{dly}. That it does not seem probable that the devil should have so much power over our Saviour, so as to carry him from place to place, at his will: But if it be replied to this, that it contains no absurdity for God to suffer it; nor was it any moral evil in Christ to be thus carried, who must be supposed herein to be altogether passive; let it be farther consider'd,

3^{dly}. That if the devil really carried him through the air, from the wilderness to the temple, this could not well be done, in an invisible way; for that is contrary to the nature of things; for even the motion of a bird, which is a far less creature, through the air, if it be in the day-time, is not invisible. Now if this preter-natural motion of our Saviour's body through the air was visible, how comes it to pass that no notice was taken of it by the *Jews*, which would have been as remarkable an occurrence, as his flying from a pinnacle of the temple to the ground? Some of them, doubtless, would have been amused at it, and probably it would have given them occasion to have said something concerning this preter-natural event; and others, it may be, would have reproach'd him for it; and from his flying by the

power of the devil, would have taken occasion to say, that his other miracles were wrought by the same power, which would have given umbrage to the objection when they said, *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.*

If it be farther objected, that the devil might carry him to the top of the temple by night, and so his motion through the air not be observed. This seems very improbable; for then he must continue there all night, till the people were gather'd together the next day on the plain, at the foot thereof, otherwise his casting himself down from thence would not have answered the end designed thereby; there being none of the *Jews* present to observe the miracle; and so the devil might have spared the pains of carrying him to a pinnacle of the temple, and might have as well tempted him to have cast himself down from a precipice in the wilderness. We own, notwithstanding, that it might be replied to this, that the devil might raise a thick fog in the air in the day-time, so that the people could not see him convey'd from the wilderness to the temple: But, tho' this be possible, it don't seem probable, especially when we consider the other reasons brought against this supposition in general; therefore we must have recourse to some other sense, in which this scripture is to be understood.

Accordingly some suppose this was only done in vision, and that he continued all the while in the wilderness, which will, in some measure, account for several difficulties, that would arise from the supposition, of the devil's having power over him to carry him from place to place; and this agrees with those other scriptures, that speak of his being tempted forty days in the wilderness. Nevertheless, this sense does not appear very probable, as it supposes the devil to have had a greater power over Christ's imagination, than can readily be allowed of. And it seems to contain an absurdity in this respect; that Christ could not be said to work a miracle, by throwing himself from a pinnacle of the temple, if he were all that while standing in the wilderness; and what proof would that have been of his being the Son of God?

Object. If it be objected to this, that many things are said to be done, in vision, by the prophets, which could not well be said to be done otherwise; as the prophet *Ezekiel*, when he was among the captives in *Babylon*, is said to be took by a lock of his head, and, by the Spirit, lifted up between the earth and the heaven,
and

and brought in the visions of God to Jerusalem¹; the meaning of which is, that he had an impression hereof made on his imagination, not much unlike to a dream, which inclined him, at the same time, to think himself carried to Jerusalem, and to behold the idolatry that was practised there.

Answ. To this it may be replied, that this was a divine impression upon the soul of the prophet; and we are not, from hence, inclined to think, that because God has sometimes appeared in vision to his people, that the devil was suffer'd to do so, with respect to our Saviour, or to have power over his imagination, to give it that disturbance, that would result from hence.

Therefore there is another sense, a little different from this, in which we cannot but acquiesce, though not without great deference to those who are otherwise minded, namely, that the devil had neither power over Christ's body, nor actually carried him from the wilderness to a pinnacle of the temple, on the one hand; nor had he power to give disturbance to his imagination on the other: But that he tempted, or endeavoured to persuade him to go with him to Jerusalem, which is called *the Holy City*, and then to go up to the top of the temple, and so cast himself down among the people.

Object. The principal objection that is brought against this sense of the words, is taken from its being contrary to the literal, or grammatical sense thereof, inasmuch as the devil is said *to take him up into the Holy City, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple*; which does not seem to imply barely his discoursing with him of going there, and casting himself down from thence.

Answ. The only answer that need be given to this objection is, that, since what is done in vision is represented in scripture, as though it had been actually done, why may we not suppose, that what is offer'd in conversation, may be represented as though it had been actually done, especially considering, that what was only discoursed of between persons, is sometimes said to be done; as when the *chief butler* reports the conversation which he and the *chief baker* had with Joseph in the prison. He represents Joseph, as doing what he only spake of, when he says, *Me be restored unto mine office, and him be hanged*²; therefore there is no absurdity in supposing, that the devil's

carrying our Saviour to Jerusalem, and setting him on a pinnacle of the temple, denotes nothing else but his tempting him to go there; and, if we take it in this sense, the temptation is no less subtil, or pernicious, in the design thereof; and our Saviour's answer to it, is equally apposite, and to the purpose, as though we suppose the devil had power to carry him there.

We shall now consider Christ's answer to this temptation, which is contain'd in these words, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, in which he refers to the words of Moses³; which, though they more immediately relate to the people's murmuring, and questioning, whether God was among them or not⁴, upon which occasion the name of the place was called *Massah*; yet, inasmuch as there are various ways of tempting God, this general prohibition might well be applied by our Saviour to his own case, in answer to Satan's temptation; and then it is as though he should say, I will not tempt the Lord my God, either by desiring a farther proof of my sonship, which has so lately been attested, by a voice from heaven; or rather, I will not tempt him, so as to expect his protection, when engaged, according to thy desire, in an unlawful action.

Thirdly, The third and last temptation, which was the most audacious, vile, and blasphemous of all, is contained in *Ver. 8, 9.* in which Satan makes an overture of the *kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof*, to him, provided he would fall down and worship him; in which we may observe,

1. Something preparatory to it, when 'tis said, *The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.* Whether this was actually done, or he only tempted him to go up into an high mountain, which was more convenient for this purpose, I will not peremptorily determine. There are not so many difficulties attending the supposition, that it was actually done, as there were in the former temptation. If it be concluded, that it was actually done, it is very much to be doubted whether there was any mountain so high, as that he might, from thence, have a prospect of the kingdoms of the world; or, if there was an exceeding high mountain in the wilderness where Christ was tempted, yet, if we consider the nature of vision,

¹ Ezek. viii. 3.

² Gen. xli. 13.

³ Deut. vi. 16.

⁴ Exod. xvii. 7.

there are two things that would hinder a person's seeing the kingdoms of the world, though it were from the highest mountain.

(1.) The convexity, or unevenness of the surface of the earth, which would hinder the strongest eye from seeing many kingdoms of the world; besides, the sight would be hinder'd by other mountains intervening.

(2.) If there were several kingdoms, or countries, which might be beheld from the top of an exceeding high mountain, yet the organ of sight is too weak to reach many miles. Therefore, when *Moses* was commanded, by God, to go up to the top of mount *Pisgah*, to take a view of the whole land of *Canaan*, it is generally thought there was something miraculous in his strengthening his sight, to see to the utmost bounds thereof; accordingly 'tis said, that *the Lord shewed him all the land*^v. Now this can hardly be applicable to the case before us, relating to the devil's shewing our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world; therefore the best and most common sense that is given hereof, is, that he made a representation of the kingdoms and glories of the world in the air, and presented them to our Saviour's view in a moment; and a mountain was more convenient for this purpose, than if he had done it in a valley; which seems to be the most probable sense of this text.

2. We shall now consider the temptation it self, which is mentioned in *Ver. 9.* *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* The Evangelist *Luke* adds something that is omitted by *Matthew*, as a farther illustration of this temptation, namely, that the power of conferring a right to the kingdoms of the world, was *deliver'd unto him*; and that *to whomsoever he will, he gives it*². In this temptation, we may observe,

1st. The abominable pride and insolence of the devil, and his appearing herein to be the father of lies. Nothing could be more false, than for him to assert that the world was given him to dispose of, as he pleased; whatever hand he may have in disposing of it among his subjects, by divine permission; yet he has no right to do this; so that herein we may observe his proud and blasphemous insinuation, in pretending to have a grant from God to dispose of that which he reserves in his own hand, to give as he pleases.

2^{dly}. All that he pretends to give our Saviour, is only *the kingdoms of the world*;

and, in exchange for them, he must quit his right to that better world, which he had, by inheritance, a right to, and a power to dispose of, which the devil has not.

3^{dly}. He pretends to give our Saviour nothing but what, as God and Mediator, he had a right to. This Satan maliciously questions, when, by the overture he makes thereof, he insinuates, that he must be beholden to him for it.

4^{thly}. This he proposes, as an expedient for him, to arrive to glory and honour an easier way, than to attain it by sufferings; therefore 'tis as though he should say; Thou expectest a kingdom beyond this world, but there are many troubles that lie in the way to it; whereas, by following my advice, and complying with this temptation, thou may'st avoid those sufferings, and enter into the present possession of the kingdoms and glories of this world; by which, 'tis probable, he makes him an overture of the whole *Roman* empire: But this our Saviour despises, for he offer'd it, who had no right to give it; and the terms, on which the overture was made, were very dishonourable; and the honour it self was such, as he did not value, for his kingdom was not of this world. If he had aim'd at earthly grandeur, he might easily have attained it; for we read, that he might once, not only have been made a king, but that the people intended to come and *make him so by force*^a; upon which occasion, he discover'd the little value he had for this honour, by his retiring from them into a *mountain himself alone*, rather chusing to continue in the low estate, which he designed to submit to in this world, as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Thus concerning the overture made by Satan to our Saviour. Now let us consider the condition on which he made it, namely, that he *should fall down and worship him*; in which we may observe his pride, in pretending to have a right to divine honour, and how he attempts to usurp the throne of God, and that to such a degree, that no one must expect favours from him, without giving him that honour, that is due to God alone.

Again, he boldly and blasphemously tempts Christ to abandon and withdraw himself from his allegiance to God, and, at the same time, to deny his own deity, as the Object of worship, and thereby to cast away that crown of glory, which he

^v Deut. xxxiv. 1.

^a Luke iv. 6.

² John vi. 15.

494 CHRIST'S Reply. He suffer'd the sinless Infirmities of this Life.

has by nature, and to put it on the head of his avowed enemy. Thus concerning his third and last temptation; we may now consider,

3. Christ's reply to it, together with the repulse given to the adversary, and the victory obtained over him, who hereupon departed from him; where we may observe,

(1.) That he again makes use of scripture, referring to what is said therein, in different words, though the sense be the same, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and to him shalt thou cleave*^b. This is a duty not only founded in scripture, but in the law of nature, and may be proved from the perfections of God, and our relation to him, as creatures.

(2.) Our Saviour detests the temptation with the greatest abhorrence, can no longer bear to converse with the blasphemer, and therefore says, *Get thee hence, Satan*. He commands him to be gone, and Satan immediately leaves him, being, as it were, driven away by his almighty power. This is more than we can do; nevertheless, in the like case, we ought, as the Apostle did, to beseech the Lord that he might depart from us^c; or, to use our Saviour's words on another occasion, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan*. Thus Christ's temptations, though very grievous and afflictive, were not only surmounted, but the adversary, that assaulted him, was overcome by him, in his own Person.

From what hath been said, concerning Christ's temptations, we infer,

1st. The desperate and unparallel'd boldness of Satan, in that tho' he knew well enough that Christ was the Son of God, and therefore able not only to resist, but to destroy him: yet that he should venture thus to assault him; whereas, at other times, he seems to be afraid of him, which occasioned him to say, *Art thou come to destroy us before the time*^d? and elsewhere, *Art thou come to torment us before the time*^e? Besides, he knew, that by this action, his own guilt and misery would be increased; but what will not malice, and a deep-rooted hatred of God and godliness, prompt persons to! The attempt was certainly most unfeasible, as well as prejudicial to himself. Did Satan suppose that he should gain a victory over him? Could he think, that he, who was God, as well as man, was not more than a match for him? It may be, he might

hope, that tho' the human nature of Christ were united to the divine, yet it might be left to it self; and then he thought it more possible to gain some advantages against it, which was a groundless supposition, and altogether unbecoming the relation that there is between these two natures: And it was also impossible that he should be overcome, inasmuch as he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his first conception, and the unction which he had received from the Holy Ghost, would have effectually secured him from falling. Whether the devil knew this, or no, he did not consider it; and therefore his attempt against our Saviour, was an instance of the most stupendous folly in him, who is described as the old serpent for his great subtilty.

2^{dly}. From Christ's temptation, we may infer the greatness of his sufferings. It could not but be grievous to him to be insulted, attack'd, and the utmost endeavours used to turn him aside from his allegiance to God, by the worst of his enemies. And, as Satan's temptations are not the smallest part of the affliction of his people, they can't be reckon'd the smallest part of his own; nevertheless, the issue thereof was glorious to himself, and shameful to the enemy that attack'd him.

3^{dly}. This affords encouragement to believers, under the various temptations they are exposed to. They are not, indeed, to think it strange that they are tempted, inasmuch as they are herein conform'd to Jesus Christ, the Captain of their salvation; but they may, from Christ's temptation, be instructed that it is not a sin to be tempted, though it be a sin to comply with Satan's temptations; and therefore that they have no ground to conclude, as many do, that they are not God's children, because they are tempted. Moreover, they may not only hope to be made partakers of Christ's victory, as the fruits and effects thereof redound to the salvation of his people, but to receive help and succour from him when they are tempted; as he, who suffer'd, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted^f. Thus concerning Christ's humiliation, as tempted.

4. Christ humbled himself, in being subject to those sinless infirmities, which were either common to the human nature, or particularly accompanying that low condition in which he was. Some

^b Deut. vi. 13. and Chap. x. 20.
^f Heb. ii. 18.

^c 2 Cor. xii. 8.

^d Mark i. 24.

^e Matt. viii. 29.

Of CHRIST'S Sufferings immediately before his Death. 495

of those afflictions, which he endured, took their rise from the sin or misery of others: Thus he is said to have been *afflicted in all the affliction of his people*^s; which was an instance of that great sympathy and compassion which he bare towards them. Sometimes he was grieved for the degeneracy and apostacy of the *Jewish* nation, the contempt they cast on the gospel, whereby his ministry, though discharged with the greatest faithfulness, was, through the unbelief of those among whom he exercised it, without its desired success: Thus he is represented by the prophet, as complaining, *I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain*^h; and, when he had almost finished his ministry among them, and look'd upon *Jerusalem* as a self-ruin'd people, *He beheld the city and wept over it*ⁱ. And, besides this, he was sometimes grieved for the remainders of corruption, and the breakings forth thereof in those whom he loved, in a distinguishing manner: Thus he was sometimes afflicted in his own spirit, by reason of the hardness of the heart of his disciples, and the various instances of their unbelief.

These afflictions, more especially, might be called relative, as the occasion thereof was seated in others: But there were many afflictions which he endured that were, more especially personal; such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, weariness in travelling to and fro in the discharge of his publick ministry; and that poverty and want of the common necessities of life, which he submitted to, whose divine bounty supplies the wants of all creatures. These, and many other sufferings, he endured in life, which were agreeable to that state of humiliation, in which he was, during the whole course thereof. And this leads us,

Secondly, To consider his humiliation immediately before, as well as in and after his death.

QUEST. XLIX. *How did Christ humble himself in his death?*

ANSW. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betray'd by *Judas*, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemn'd by *Pilate*, and tormented by his

persecutors, having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and born the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

QUEST. L. *Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?*

ANSW. Christ's humiliation after his death, consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, *He descended into hell*.

IN considering the subject-matter of these *Answers*, we are led to take a view of our Saviour, in the last stage of life, exposed to those sufferings which went more immediately before, or attended his death. And,

I. Let us consider him in his sufferings in the garden, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; and he desired his disciples, not only as an instance of their sympathy with, and regard to him in his agony, that they would tarry at a small distance from him, while he went a little farther, and pray'd, as one that tasted more of the bitterness of that cup, which he was to drink, than he had done before; but press'd this upon them, as what was necessary to their own advantage, when he says, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*^k. But they seemed very little concerned, either for his distress, or their own impending danger; for, when he return'd, he found them asleep, and upbraids them for it, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour*^l; and afterwards, though he had given them this first kind and gentle reproof, for their unaccountable stupidity, and repeated his charge, that they should watch and pray; yet, when he came a second time, he found them asleep again^m. This was, doubtless, an addition to his

^s *Isai.* lxxiii. 9.
^m *Ver.* 43.

^h *Chap.* xlix. 4.

ⁱ *Luke* xix. 41.

^k *Matt.* xxvi. 38, 39, 41.

^l *Ver.* 40.

afflictions,

496 CHRIST *betray'd by Judas, and forsaken by his Disciples.*

afflictions, that they, who were under the highest obligations to him, should be so little concerned for him.

II. After this, he was betray'd by *Judas*, a pretended friend, which added to the affliction. This does not argue any unwillingness in him to suffer, as is evident from his own words, some time before, *viz. I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straiten'd till it be accomplished*^a? As also from his going up to *Jerusalem* with that design, as knowing that his hour was at hand. How easily might he have declined this journey, had he been unwilling to suffer? And, if he thought it his duty to be at *Jerusalem*, at the feast of the passover, which was not absolutely necessary, (for all were not obliged to come there at that feast) he might, notwithstanding, had he been unwilling to suffer, have went there privately: But, instead of that, he made a more publick entrance into it than was usual, riding in triumph, and accepting of the loud acclamations and *Hosannas* of the multitude, which, any one might suppose, would draw forth the envy of his inveterate enemies, and sharpen their malice against him, and thereby hasten the execution of their bloody design.

Again, that he did not suffer unwillingly, appears, in that, when the band of officers, being led by *Judas*, was sent to apprehend him, *He asks them, Whom seek ye? They answer'd him, Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus saith unto them, I am he*; upon which we read, that *they went backward, and fell to the ground*^b, and gave him an opportunity to make his escape, had he intended to decline these last sufferings: But he not only deliver'd himself into their hands, but prohibited the overture of a rescue, which *Peter* attempted in his favour^c. As to what concerns his being betray'd into the hands of his enemies, by one of his disciples, this is often mentioned, as a very considerable part of his sufferings: The price which the traitor demanded, or which was the most that they would give him for this barbarous and inhuman action, was thirty pieces of silver^d. This being foretold by the prophet, is represented as an instance of the highest contempt that could be cast upon him: He calls it *a goodly price that I was*

prized at of them^e; it was the price of a *servant*, or slave, when *push'd by an ox, so that he died*^f. This shews how little he was valued, by those who were under the highest obligations to him. And providence permitted it to be a part of his sufferings, that we may learn, from hence, that hypocrites sometimes mix themselves with his faithful servants, who, notwithstanding the mask, or disguise of religion, which they affect, their hypocrisy will, one time or other, be made manifest. This was not a wound given by an open enemy, but a pretended friend, and therefore more grievous; and this might also give occasion to some to cast a reproach on his followers, (for what will not malice sometimes suggest) as though they were all like him; and their pretence to religion were no other than hypocrisy.

III. Another instance of Christ's humiliation was, in that he was forsaken by his disciples: Thus we read, that when he was apprehended, *all the disciples forsook him and fled*^g; from whence we may learn,

1. How unable the best of God's people are to exercise that holy courage and fortitude that is necessary in trying dispensations of providence, especially when destitute of extraordinary assistance from the Spirit of God.

2. This was order'd by providence, to enhance Christ's sufferings, in which none stood with him to comfort or strengthen him; as the Apostle *Paul* says, *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me*^h, which could not be otherwise than a very afflictive circumstance; nevertheless,

3. There was a farther design of providence in permitting this cowardise, namely, that they might not suffer with him; and therefore 'tis observed, by one of the Evangelists, that when our Saviour was apprehended by the officers, he desired leave of them, that his disciples might *go their way*ⁱ. If they had been apprehended, it may be, they might have been accused, condemn'd, and crucified with him; which might give occasion to some to suppose, that they bore a part in the purchase of our redemption, which belong'd to him alone;

^a Luke xii. 50.

^b John xviii. 4—6.

^c Ver. 10, 11.

^d A piece of silver is the same which is elsewhere called a shekel, which was valued at about half a crown, English money; so that the whole price for which our Saviour was sold into their hands, was no more than Three pounds fifteen shillings.

^e Zech. xi. 13.

^f Exod. xxi. 32.

^g Matt. xxvi. 56.

^h 2 Tim. iv. 16.

ⁱ John xviii. 8.

CHRIST *denied by Peter, scorned and rejected by the World* 497

and therefore 'tis said, concerning him, *I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me*^v. To this we may add,

IV. That it was another part of Christ's sufferings, that he was disowned and denied by *Peter*; since this would give occasion to some to think that he was not worthy to be acknowledged by his friends, while he was insulted and persecuted by his enemies. In the account the Evangelist gives of this matter^z, we may observe,

1. That *Peter* was not, at this time, in the way of his duty, though, probably, it was love to our Saviour, and a desire to see the issue of his trial, that might occasion his going into the High Priest's palace; yet this he had no call to do at present, it was a running into the midst of danger, especially considering our Saviour, as in the scripture but now refer'd to, had got leave for his disciples to withdraw. This, *Peter* ought to have done; for, as we are not to decline sufferings when called to bear them, so we are not, without a sufficient warrant, to rush into them, or to go, as he did, in the way of temptation.

2. It was not only shame that induced him to deny our Saviour, but fear; for, 'tis probable, he might be informed that the High Priest asked him concerning his disciples, as well as his doctrine, therefore he might think, that, by owning him and his doctrine, he might be exposed to suffer with him; which, notwithstanding his self-confident resolution a little before, when he said, *Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*^z, he was now afraid to do.

3. He was not only accosted by the damsel, who told him, that he was *with Jesus of Galilee*; but he was attack'd by one of the servants of the High Priest, being his kinsman, whose ear *Peter* cut off, who said, *Did I not see thee in the garden with him*^b? This still encreased his fear; for he not only appeared as a witness against him, and charged him with having been with him in the garden, but also intimates, that he attempted to rescue him, and that by force of arms, which, as he apprehended, might render him obnoxious to the lash of the law, as endeavouring to make a riot, for which he concluded that he was liable to suffer punishment; and the person, whose ear he

cut off, being the High Priest's kinsman, this would lay him still more open to his resentment. Thus *Peter*, through the weakness of his faith, and the prevalency of his fear, denied our Saviour; and this was thrice repeated with curses and execrations annexed to it, which still encreased his guilt, tended to expose religion, as well as cast a reproach on our Saviour, who was then bearing his testimony to the truth.

V. Another instance of Christ's humiliation was, that he was scorn'd and rejected by the world; scorn'd, as though he had been inferior to them: Thus he is represented by the Psalmist, as saying, *I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head*^c. This was, doubtless, a malicious design, to bring his doctrine into contempt, and fill the minds of men with prejudice against it, and make them ashamed to own it. Our Saviour puts these both together, when he speaks of persons being *ashamed of him, and of his words*^d. They had often rejected him, by their unbelief; and this crime was the greater, because they were under the greatest obligations to the contrary. How often did he invite them, in the most affectionate manner, to come to him, and annex hereunto a promise of eternal life? we find, notwithstanding that, he had reason to complain, as he does, *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*^e.

Here we may observe the different temper of the Jews, before he appear'd publickly among them, from what it was afterwards. When *John the Baptist*, his forerunner, told them, that he would shortly be made manifest to *Israel*, multitudes flock'd to his ministry, counted him as a great prophet, and rejoiced in his light for a season, and, at the same time, were baptized, and professed their willingness to yield obedience to Christ. But all this was upon a groundless supposition, that he would appear as an earthly monarch, erect a temporal kingdom, bring all other powers into subjection to it, and so deliver them from the *Roman* yoke, and advance them to great honours in the world: But, when they saw it otherwise, and that he appear'd in a low humbled state, and profess'd, that his kingdom was not of this world, and there-

^v Isai. lxiii. 3.

^d Mark viii. 38.

^z Matt. xxvii. 69—72.

^e John v. 40.

^a Ver. 35.

^b John xviii. 26.

^c Psal. xxii. 6, 7.

498 CHRIST scorn'd and revil'd. What may be infer'd from thence.

fore his subjects must seek for a glory that lies beyond it, which cannot be beheld, but by faith, and, in the expectation thereof, take up their cross and follow him, immediately they were offended in him: Thus the prophet foretells, that he should be for a *stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel*^f; and the Psalmist styles him, *The stone which the builders refused*^g; both which predictions are applied to Christ by the Apostle Peter^h. This was also foretold by Simeon, concerning our Saviour, when he was in his infancy, *Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign, which shall be spoken against*ⁱ. And this offence taken at him, is intimated to have been almost universal, as appear'd from the small number that adhered to him, when he was here on earth, which gave him occasion to say, *Blessed is he who-soever shall not be offended in me*^k.

This treatment he met with throughout the whole course of his ministry, when they loaded him with the most injurious reproaches: But, immediately before his death, they filled up the measure of their iniquity, by reproaching him to the utmost; then it is observed that they blasphemed, and cast contempt on him, with respect to all those offices which he executes as Mediator. As to his prophetic office, with what abominable profaneness do they speak of the sacred gift of prophecy, which their fathers always counted a peculiar glory, which was confer'd upon some of them, whereby they were honoured above all other nations in the world! And what contempt do they cast on him, who had sufficiently proved himself to be greater than all other prophets; when, as it is said, *They smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?*^l They also express'd their blasphemy in contemning his priestly office, when they say, *He saved others, himself he cannot save*^m; and also his kingly, when, in derision, they put on him a scarlet robe, platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, *Hail King of the Jews*ⁿ.

They also express'd the greatest contempt of him, by preferring a vile and no-

torious criminal, who was a robber, and a murtherer, before him; and accordingly, as the prophet says, *He was number'd with the transgressors*, as though he had been the greatest of them, whereas he had *done no violence; neither was any deceit in his mouth*^o: Thus the Apostle tells them, *Ye denied the Holy One, and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you*^p; when Pilate made an overture to release him, they cried, with one consent, *Not this man, but Barabbas*^q.

From hence we may learn,

1. That the best of men are not to expect to pass through the world without reproach, or contempt, how exact, innocent, or blameless, soever their conversation be.

2. We are not to judge of persons, or things, especially in matters of religion, merely by the opinion of the world concerning them; since it is no uncommon thing for religion it self to be had in contempt, as well as those who adhere to it.

3. We ought not to have respect to the praise or esteem of men, as a motive to induce us to choose and adhere to the way of God, and godliness: Thus our Saviour says, *I receive not honour from men*^r, that is, I value it not, so as to regulate my conversation thereby; and then he adds, *How can ye believe which receive honour, one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*^s

4. Let us not think the worse of Christ, or his gospel, because they are reproach'd, but rather, as the Apostle adviseth, *Go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach*^t; and not only be content to bear it, but count it our honour; as he says elsewhere, concerning himself, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*^u.

5. Let us take heed, that, while we seem to honour Christ by our profession, and testify our abhorrence of the contempt that was cast on him, by his enemies, we do not reproach him by our practise; and that either by sinning presumptuously, which is called, *A reproaching of the Lord*^x, or by not reproving, and bearing our testimony against those who blaspheme and revile him; by which means, we shall partake with them in their crime.

VI. Our Saviour was condemn'd by Pilate. The former indignities offer'd him,

^f Isai. viii. 14.
ⁱ Chap. xxvi. 67, 68.
^g John xviii. 39, 40.
^k Num. xv. 30.

^h Psal. cxviii. 22.
^l Chap. xvii. 42.
^m Chap. v. 41.

ⁿ 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.
^o Ver. 28, 29.
^r Ver. 44.

^p Luke ii. 34.
^q Isai. liii. 9, 12.
^s Heb. xiii. 13.

^t Matt. xi. 6.
^u Ac's iii. 14.
^x Gal. vi. 14.

were without any pretence, or form of law; but now he is set before a court of judicature, and there tried, and sentence pass'd immediately before his crucifixion. In this they had no regard to the exercise of justice, nor desire to proceed in a legal way with any good and honourable design, but to prevent the inconvenience that would have arisen from their putting him to death in a riotous and tumultuous manner, without the form of a trial. This they had, in some particular instances, at other times, designed, or attempted to do, but they thought it not a safe way of proceeding; since they might afterwards have been called to an account for it, by the civil magistrate, as the town-clerk says, upon occasion of the tumult at Ephesus, *We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar*^y. Therefore our Saviour, being apprehended, is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor; and there were the chief Priests and Elders met together, as his accusers and prosecutors; and the whole process was the most notorious instance of injustice, that ever was practised in any court of judicature in the world. Whatever pretence of law there might be, the assembly was certainly tumultuous. 'Tis not usual for persons who are tried for capital matters to be insulted, not only by the rude multitude of spectators that are present, but by the judge himself, as our Saviour was, being spit upon, buffeted, and smote with the palms of their hands; and Pilate also, with a sarcastick sneer, unbecoming the character of a judge, says, *Behold the Man; Behold your King*^z. Here we may observe,

1. Concerning his prosecutors, that they sought false witnesses against him, that is, they endeavoured to persuade, or bribe any that they could find, among the most vile and profligate wretches, to come in against him; nevertheless, they could not bring this matter to bear for some time: Thus 'tis said, *They sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none*^a. The evidence that many gave was not regarded, and therefore they were set aside; at last they found two, whom they depended on, as legal evidences: But 'tis observ'd, that *their witness did not agree together*^b; and, if they had agreed in their testimony, the matter alledged against him was no crime, namely, *We heard him*

say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands; and, within three days, I will build another made without hands^c; which refers to what he had said when he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and foretelling his resurrection from the dead, he uses this metaphorical way of speaking; that when they had destroyed this temple, meaning his body, he would raise it up in three days. We will suppose, that the Jews, then present, did not understand what he meant by this expression, or that he did not explain it, as the Evangelist does: But let them take it in what sense they would, it carries no crime in it for him to say so; and therefore it is observed, that when this was witnessed against him, though the High Priest urged him to make a reply, *he held his peace, and answered nothing*, because there was nothing alledged worth an answer; the thing he was charged with carried in it its own confutation, and infer'd not the least degree of guilt in him. This his enemies themselves seem'd to be sensible of; and therefore they ask him this trying question, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?* expecting that his reply to this would have afforded matter for them to proceed upon for his conviction. To this our Saviour gives a direct answer, saying, *I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*^d. Here he was called to give a reply; the question was worthy of an answer; and therefore he does not, on this occasion, hold his peace, but witnessed a good confession, though he knew it would cost him his life.

2. Some things may be observed concerning Pilate's conduct in his trial; as,

(1.) He acted contrary to that good advice that was given him by his wife; which, because the Evangelist thinks it worthy to be taken notice of, as occasioned by a dream, in which she told him, *She had suffer'd many things because of him*^e, gives ground to conclude that it was a divine dream, which render'd the advice more solemn, and, as such, deserved his regard.

(2.) He acted against the dictates of his own conscience; for *he knew that the chief priests had deliver'd him for envy*^f, and therefore he ought to have stop'd all farther proceedings, as in cases of malicious prosecutions; and it farther appears, that he acted against his conscience;

^y Acts xix. 40.
^d Ver. 62.

^z John xix. 5, 14.
^e Matt. xxvii. 19.

^a Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.
^f Mark x. 10.

^b Mark xiv. 59.

^c Ver. 58.

500 CHRIST, tormented by his Persecutors, bore the wrath of God.

in that he took water, and washed his hands, before the multitude, saying, *I am innocent of the blood of this just Person*^g.

(3.) He appears to have been a very mean-spirited man, and therefore was apprehensive that the Jews, had he released our Saviour, would have accused him to *Cesar*, for sparing one whom they would have pretended to have been an usurper, and a rebel, inasmuch as he stiled himself *King of the Jews*. Accordingly he feared that he should have been turn'd out of his place, or otherwise punished, provided the matter were not fully heard, or the misrepresentations that might be made thereof, were believed by him. This seems the main reason of his delivering our Saviour up to them, to be crucified: Thus it is observed, that *Pilate* first sought to release him; but, upon the Jews saying, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend*, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, and, in haste, deliver'd him unto them to be crucified^h.

(4.) When he thought it his interest to comply with the Jews in this matter, he did not pass sentence on him himself, it may be, thinking that not so adviseable, as being contrary to the profession he had, a little before this, made of his innocence: But he asked his prosecutors, what he should do with him? which was an unprecedented instance of barbarity and injustice, in one who had the character of a judge, or magistrateⁱ.

VII. Our Saviour was tormented by his persecutors, scourged, buffeted, smitten with the palms of their hands, crown'd with thorns, which, as most divines suppose, pierced his head, and drew blood from thence, which was a part of the torments he endured. And to this we may add, that they compell'd him to bear his cross, till his strength was so exhausted, that he could carry it no longer; and

then they obliged one *Simon*, a Cyrenian, to bear it; or, as *Luke* says, to bear it after him^k, that is, as some suppose, to help him to carry it, going behind, and bearing a part of the weight thereof. These things he endured, immediately before his crucifixion, from wicked men, divested of all humanity, as well as religion: But still there is something more afflictive than this, which he endured; accordingly it is farther observed,

VIII. That he conflicted with the terrors of death, felt, and bore the weight of God's wrath; these were the sufferings which he endured, more especially in his soul. From whence we may observe, that the death he was going to endure, was exceeding formidable to him, and accompanied with great terrors; therefore there must certainly be some bitter ingredients in it, more than in the death of others. If we enquire what it was therein that seem'd so terrible to him, when many of the martyrs, who have been, as the Apostle says, *pressed out of measure above strength*^l, that is, suffer'd as much as frail nature could well bear, have endured it without any dread of the wrath of God, the sting and bitterness thereof being taken away; why then should our Saviour, who never contracted the least degree of guilt, have any conflict of this nature in his own spirit? To this it may be replied, that there were some things in his death that render'd it more formidable, than it ever was to any of his saints and martyrs. For,

1. It is more than probable that the powers of darkness had a great hand in setting before his view the terrors of the wrath of God due to sin, which none are better able to do, than they who are the subjects thereof; and therefore it is observed, in this *Answer*, that he conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness. The devil is sometimes said

^g Matt. xxvii. 24.

^h John xix. 12, 13, 16.

ⁱ *Pilate* is characterized, by various writers, as a man of inhuman cruelty, insatiable avarice, and inflexible obstinacy: An instance of his cruelty we have mentioned in *Luke* xiii. 1. in his mingling the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices, that is, as some suppose, he fell upon them without a fair trial, and murder'd them, while they were engaged in a solemn act of religious worship, offering sacrifice at *Jerusalem*, in one of the publick festivals; pretending, though without a fair trial, that they were of the same mind with *Judas* of *Galilee*, who had persuaded many of the *Galileans* to refuse to give tribute to *Cesar*. A learned writer [*Vid. Grot. in Luke* xiii. 1.] supposes, not only that this was the occasion of this inhuman action, which is not improbable, (though *Josephus* makes no mention of it;) but also that this is one of those things which was reported to the Emperor, who did not approve of it. And afterwards there were other instances of his oppression and male-administration laid before *Tiberius*, which, had not that Emperor's death prevented it, would have occasion'd his disgrace; and afterwards he fell under the displeasure of his successor, and was not only turn'd out of his procuratorship, but reduced to such miserable circumstances, that he laid violent hands on himself, [*Vid. Phil. Jud. Lib. de Leg. ad Caj. & Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XVIII. cap. 5. & Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. 7.*] Therefore we may well suppose, that though he had, in other respects, no regard to the Jews; yet, on this occasion, he fear'd, lest they should report his vile actions to the Emperor, and that they would represent this to him with a malicious insinuation, that he was his enemy, because he spared our Saviour: This occasioned him to deliver him up to them, to do what they would with him.

^k John xix. 17. compared with *Luke* xxiii. 26.

^l 2 Cor. i. 8.

The Death of the Cross most cruel and painful. 501

to have *the power of death*^m, that is, if the Spirit of God do not come in with his comforting presence, but Satan be suffer'd to do what he can to fill the soul with horror, he hath certainly power to make death, beyond measure, terrible. His design herein, with respect to our Saviour, was either to drive him to despair, induce him to repent of his undertaking what he came into the world about, or, at least, to take some indirect methods to decline suffering. That Satan had some hand in this matter, we infer from what our Saviour says, when, considering himself as fallen into the hands of his enraged enemies, he tells them, not only that this was *their hour*, that is, the time in which they were suffer'd to express their rage and malice against him, but that it was the hour of *the power of darkness*ⁿ.

2. His death was in it self more terrible than the death of his people, when the sting and bitterness thereof is taken away from them; therefore it is farther observed, in this *Answer*, that he felt and bore the weight of God's wrath, which was the punishment of the sins of his people, for whom he suffer'd. 'Twas upon this account that he is said to *begin to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy*, to cry out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*; and to pray, that, *if it were possible*, this part of his sufferings *might pass from him*^o. We cannot suppose that he was afraid of death; but the wrath of God was what he principally fear'd. And, since this wrath is, in it self, so terrible, he might well be supposed to be amazed, and exceeding sorrowful, at the view thereof, not for his own sin, but ours, and yet herein not to be guilty of any sin himself.

That this may farther appear, let it be consider'd, that as he *bore our sins*^p, and *it pleased the Lord to bruise him* for them^q; so he bore every thing that was a punishment thereof, excepting some circumstances that are peculiar to us, and were inconsistent with his perfect holiness, and the efficacy of his sufferings, to take away the guilt of our sin; and therefore we must suppose that he bore, that is, he had an afflictive sense of the wrath of God due to it. Nothing less than this could occasion him to sweat drops of blood, in his agony, in the garden. Had there been no circumstance in his death, but barely his leaving this

miserable world, wherein he had met with such ill treatment, it would have render'd his stay therein less desirable: But, when he consider'd those bitter ingredients that were therein, and how he should, when on the cross, be forsaken of God, as to his comforting, though not his supporting presence, this made his death more formidable, than the death of any of his people can be said to be. And this leads us to consider the last part of his sufferings; and accordingly it is farther said,

IX. That he endured the shameful, painful, and cursed death of the cross. The pains that he endured before, in being buffeted, scourged, and crowned with thorns, were very great; but what he suffer'd, when nail'd to the cross, and hanging on it till he died, was too great for words to express. His body was, as it were, torn asunder by its own weight, and the small and very sensible nerves and fibres thereof broken, by their violent extension. The Apostle therefore speaks of it, as the most cruel death, as appears by the emphasis he puts on the words, *He humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross*^r. This death was a punishment peculiar to the Romans, while the empire was Heathen; but when Christianity obtained in the world, it was forbidden by supream authority, not only because of the barbarity of it, but out of respect and honour to our Saviour, who suffer'd it^s. And therefore we have only some monuments of antiquity that discover what kind of death it was; but there is enough said of it to give us ground to conclude, that it was the most cruel, painful, and formidable death; in which the body was fasten'd to, and extended on a tree, or stake, driven into the ground for that purpose; the arms extended on a transverse beam; the hands and feet fasten'd, either by ropes or nails. The former of these, as some suppose, was often used in fastening persons to the cross; and, if so, then the nailing our Saviour to it, was an instance of unusual cruelty; but whether this observation be just, or no, is uncertain.

It appears that our Saviour was nailed to the cross, by the mark and print of the nails remaining after his resurrection, which he shewed to *Thomas* for his conviction^t; and this greatly tended to increase the pain of his crucifixion, in

^m Heb. ii. 14.
^p Phil. ii. 8.

ⁿ Luke xxii. 53.

^o Vid. *Sozom. Hist. Eccl. Lib. I. cap. 8.*

^q Mark xiv. 33—36.

^r 1 Pet. ii. 24.

^s John xx. 27.

^t Isai. liii. 6.

502 *The Death of the Cross shameful, servile, and cursed.*

which the weight of the whole body depended on the hands and feet, which, being nervous, are more sensible of pain, than many other parts thereof; and, they being wounded with the nails, the pain must be much more exquisite, and this not only for a little while, but for several hours; all which time he felt the pains of death, and did, as it were, die many deaths in one. This kind of death was so cruel, and so excessively tormenting, that some of the *Roman* emperors, who were of a more merciful disposition, when persons, for the highest crimes, had deserved it, notwithstanding order'd, that they should first be slain, and then hang'd on a cross, to be exposed to shame, or as a terror to others, without suffering those inexpressible tortures, which would attend their dying on it. But our Saviour submitted to all these; and so willing was he to bear them, that when they offer'd him a mixture of wine and myrrh, as a narcotick, or stupifying potion, that he might be less sensible of his pain, which was the only kindness they pretended to shew him, and which is, by many, supposed to be customary in such cases, *he received it not*; which is as though he had said, I condemn all your offer'd assistances to ease my pain, as much as I do your insults and reproaches; all my ease and comfort shall be derived from heaven, and not from you. Thus concerning the death of the cross, as exceeding painful.

There is another circumstance observed in this death, namely, that it was shameful. Many think it was stiled so, because persons, who suffer'd it, were stripp'd of all their garments: But I am inclin'd to think, that this opinion, though almost universally received, is no better than a vulgar error; for the *Romans*, who were a civiliz'd nation, would not admit any thing to be done, which is so

contrary to the law of nature, as this thing would have been, had it been done. Besides, there are other circumstances mentioned by the Evangelist^u, which farther argue the improbability thereof.

Object. To this it is objected, that the soldiers parted our Saviour's garments, and divided them among themselves, after they had cast lots for his upper garment, or seamless coat^x, which they suppose to have been done before his crucifixion.

Ans. But to this it may be replied, that it seems more than probable, that only his upper garment, or seamless coat, was taken from him before he was nail'd to the cross, and his other garments were not taken away till he was dead, and, when he was taken down from it, they were exchanged for those linnen garments, in which he was buried. This seems evident, from the words of the Evangelist, who intimates, that his garments were taken off *when they had crucified him*. Therefore the principal reason why the death of Christ is called shameful, as the Apostle stiles it, when he says, *He despised the shame*^y, is because it was a punishment inflicted on none but those who were charged with the vilest crimes, or who were slaves; and therefore it is called a servile punishment^z. When any one was made free of *Rome*, he was exempted from it; and therefore it was reckoned the highest crime to punish such an one with it, because of the reproach thereof.

It is farther observed, that the death of the cross was a cursed death; upon which account, the Apostle speaks of Christ, as being *made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*^a. For the understanding of which, let it be consider'd, that to be accursed, sometimes signifies to be abandon'd of God and man; but far be it

^u Mark xv. 40, 41.

^x John xix. 23.

^y Heb. xii. 2.

^z It is frequently stiled, by the *Romans*, *Servile supplicium*, [vid. Val. Max. Lib. II. de discipl. milit. §. 12.] as being inflicted, by them, on none but slaves, so one [vid. Ter. Andr.] represents a master speaking to his servant, *Quid meritis es?* To which he replies, *Crucem*. & Juvenal in Satyr. 6. says, *Pone Crucem servo*. Cicero inveighs, with so much earnestness, against this severe and cruel punishment, that he signifies how glorious and delightful a thing it would be for him to declaim against it, not only at the expence of his strength, but of his very life: *Quotum ego de acerbissima morte, crudelissimoque cruciatu dicam, cum eum locum tractare capero; Et ita dicam, ut si me in ea querimonia, quam sum habiturus de istius crudelitatem, & de civium Rom. indignissima morte non modo vires, verum etiam vita deficiat, id mihi praeclarum & jucundum putem*. And elsewhere he intimates, that it was universally reckoned the highest crime to crucify any one that was free of *Rome*, in a beautiful climax, or gradation of expression: *Factus est, vinciri civem Romanum; scelus verberari: prope parricidium necari: Quid dicam in crucem tollere?* [vid. Orat. in Verr. Lib. V.] And elsewhere he says, *Nomen ipsum crucis, absit non modo a corpore civium Romanorum, sed etiam a cogitatione, oculis, auribus*. And he adds concerning it, together with other cruelties that attended it, *Harum enim omnium rerum non solum eventus, atque permissio, sed etiam conditio, expectatio, mentio ipsa denique, indigna civi Romano, atque homine libero est*. [vid. Orat. pro C. Rabir.] As for the cruelty of this death, it was so great, that the greatest tortures that are express'd by the word *Cruciatu*, are plainly derived from *Crux*, and some of the *Roman* emperors, who were of a more merciful disposition than others, considering the inhumanity of this kind of death, when they exposed some persons for their crimes to publick shame upon the cross, order'd them first to be put to death by the sword.

^a Gal. iii. 13.

CHRIST *buried with Marks of Respect by his Friends.* 503

from us to assert this concerning the blessed Jesus, who had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth. Therefore the meaning of that scripture, as applied to him, is only this, that the death of the cross had a curse annex'd to it, and it denotes, that the person, who thus suffer'd, died the death of those who were made a publick example, as though they had been abandon'd of God. Now tho' Christ's death had this appearance; yet he was, at the same time, God's beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, how much soever he bore the external marks of God's wrath, or abhorrence of our sins, for which he suffer'd. The scripture which the Apostle refers to, is in *Deut. xxi. 22, 23.* from whence we may take occasion to observe, that, after the *Jews* had put persons to death for notorious crimes, they sometimes hanged them on a tree, and such were deemed accursed.

The common punishments, which were ordained, in scripture, to be inflicted on malefactors, were burning, slaying with the sword, or stoning; and when persons were hang'd up before the Lord, that they might be a publick spectacle to others, it was done after they were slain: Thus 'tis said, that *Joshua smote the five kings, and slew them, and then hang'd them on five trees until the evening*^b; so *David* slew the two men that murder'd *Ishbosheth*, and then hang'd them over the pool in *Heshbon*^c; and, inasmuch as these are said to be hang'd before the Lord, it was a significant sign of God's righteous judgment inflicted on them for their crimes, upon which account they were said to be cursed: But our Saviour was not liable to the curse of God, as one who had committed any crime that deserved it; but it had respect to the kind of death which he endured for our sins, who were thereby exposed to the curse, or condemning sentence of the law. Thus concerning Christ's humiliation in his death.

We are now to consider his humiliation after his death. Though the greatest part of his humiliation was finished when he yielded up the ghost; yet his state of humiliation was not fully ended till he rose from the dead; therefore it is observed, in the latter of these *Answers* we are now explaining, that he was buried, and continued under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise express'd in these words, *He*

descended into hell, as it is contain'd in that *Creed*, which is commonly attributed to the *Apostles*. Here we may observe,

1. That Christ was buried. Before this, while he hanged on the cross, he had, as it was before observed, the visible mark of the curse of God upon him, without any desert of his own; and this he was deliver'd from, when he was taken down from thence. It was a custom, among the *Romans*, to suffer the bodies of those that were crucified to hang on the cross till they were devoured by wild beasts, or fowls of the air, or turn'd to corruption, unless they were given to their relations to be buried, as an act of favour: But, in this instance, we may observe, that Christ's implacable enemies desired, that his body might be taken down soon after he was dead; not out of respect to him, but for fear the land should be defiled, as God had ordained in the law, that *if a person were hang'd on a tree, his body should not remain all night upon it, but must be buried, lest the land should be defiled*^d; and they were the more importunate that he should be taken down, because of the sanctity of the approaching day^e. They petition'd *Pilate* for it with one view, and *Joseph of Arimathea*^f with another, he begged the body that he might bury it.

Here we may observe, that, after the *Jews* had done their worst against him, and he was taken from the cross, there was a becoming honour and respect shew'd to his sacred Body; and herein that scripture was fulfilled, *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich, in his death*^g; which words, indeed, seem to have some difficulty in them, as they are thus translated; for, tho' he was crucified with the wicked, it can hardly be said that he made his grave with them; and therefore I would chuse to render them, as some expositors do^h, *His grave was appointed, viz. by his persecutors, to have been with the wicked*, that is, they designed to have thrown him into the common grave of malefactors, who had no marks of respect shewn them: But it was otherwise with Christ, for *he made his grave with the rich*, that is, he was buried in the tomb of *Joseph*, a rich and honourable counsellor, where he himself designed to lie, which he had hewn out of the rock for that purpose. This honour, as the prophet observes, was confer'd on our Saviour, *because he had*

^b Josh. x. 26.
^c Isai. liii. 9.

^d 2 Sam. iv. 12.
^e See *Leviticus* in loc.

^f Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

^g John xix. 31.

^h Ver. 38.

504 CHRIST *under the Power of Death till the third Day.*

done no violence ; neither was deceit found in his mouth.

There were several reasons why God ordain'd that he should be buried, and that in such a way and place, as he was; for,

(1.) His burial was a convincing proof to the world that he was really dead; so much depended upon his death, that it was thought necessary that there should be an abundant evidence thereof. It is, indeed, expressly said, that *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*¹; and his enemies were convinced thereof, and therefore thought it needless to break his legs, as they did those of the thieves, who suffer'd with him; providence ordering this, that *that scripture should be fulfilled*, which fore-signified, that *a bone of him should not be broken*. But, besides this, that there might be a farther proof that he was really dead, it is said, that, even when they knew it, they *pierced his side*, which, of it self, would have killed him, had he not been dead: This they did, that they might be sure he was dead, before they took him down from the cross^k. And it is farther observed, that *Pilate*, his unjust judge, was resolved to be satisfied that he was really dead, before he gave orders for his being taken down from the cross: Thus 'tis said, that *Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the Centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead*^l. It may be, the reason why they were so inquisitive to know whether he were really dead, or no, was because he seemed to die in his full strength; for there is something remarkable in that expression, when the Evangelist says, *Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost*^m; whereby it appeared, that his spirits were not so much exhausted, but that he might, according to the course of nature, have lived longer; but he seem'd, by an act of his own will, to surrender his soul to God. This was so remarkable an occurrence, that it was not merely by accident that it was mentioned by the Evangelist; and, indeed, it was the means of the *Centurion's* conviction that *he was the Son of God*ⁿ.

(2.) Providence order'd that he should be buried by persons of reputation and honour, that so the world might know, that how much soever the rude multitude despised him, persons of figure and character in the world paid a due respect to him^o.

(3.) 'Twas farther ordain'd, that he should be buried in a new tomb, wherein never man was laid, that so his resurrection might be more fully demonstrated, that none might pretend that another was raised instead of him, since no other was buried in this grave.

The fine linnen, in which his body was wrapped, and the sweet spices, or perfumed ointment, with which it was embalm'd, was not only agreeable to the method of sepulture, used by the *Jews*, but it was a publick testimony of that respect which his friends bore to him, to whom his memory was precious; so that *Nicodemus*, who, before this, was afraid to come publickly to him, or who, as 'tis said, at the first, came to Jesus by night, *brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury*^p.

As Christ died, and was buried, so he continued under the power of death till the third day; this the Apostle calls, *Death's having dominion over him*^q; and it must be reckoned a part of his humiliation, as well as the act of dying; for,

1st. Though his soul enjoyed the bliss and happiness of heaven, immediately after his death, as he tells the penitent thief, that *that day he should be with him in paradise*^r; yet, inasmuch as it was, when separate, in a state of imperfection, and had a natural desire and hope of re-union with the body, this argues that there were some degrees of perfect blessedness, that it was not then possessed of.

2^{dly}. So long as he continued under the power of death, he was not fully discharged by the justice of God; neither was the work of satisfaction compleat, till he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and to have fully conquer'd death and hell, by his resurrection from the dead; this was therefore a part of his humiliation.

3^{dly}. His body, while remaining a prisoner in the grave, could not actively bring that glory to God, which it did before, or would do after its resurrection; and it was, at that time, incapable of the heavenly blessedness, and, in particular, of its being so glorious a body, as now it is.

All these things attending the state of separate souls, or the unseen state, into which Christ is said to go, immediately

after

¹ John xix. 30.

^o John xix. 38, 39.

^k Chap. xix. 33, 34.

^p Chap. xix. 39, 40.

^l Mark xv. 44.

^q Rom. vi. 9.

^m Ver. 37.

^r Luke xxiii. 43.

ⁿ Ver. 39.

after his death, some call, as 'tis observed in this *Answer*, his descent into hell, which is what we are next to consider: But, since this is largely and judiciously handled by several writers^f, I shall insist on it with brevity. And,

1. Consider it as founded on scripture, as the judicious *Calvin* does^g, without regard had to its being inserted in any *Creed* of human compofure: Thus it is said, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*^h; where it seems, as the author but now mentioned observes, to be put before his death; and therefore he supposes, that the Apostle hereby intends the sufferings which our Saviour endured in his soul, which were not, in all respects, unlike the punishment due to sin in hell: And herein he is followed by several modern writers; and the principal reason, which they assign for it, is, because, as our Surety, he endured all the essential parts of that punishment, which our sins had deserved; and therefore they suppose, that he endured an afflictive sensation of the wrath of God, which bore some resemblance to that which is endured in hell.

But, tho' I would not extenuate Christ's sufferings, especially in that part thereof, that was most formidable to him, which was the cup that he desired, if it were possible, that it might pass from him; nor can we suppose that any thing less than a view which he had of the wrath of God, due to our sins, would fill him with that horror and amazement, which he expressed: yet we ought carefully to distinguish between this part of his sufferings, and the punishment of sin in hell, inasmuch as he was exempted from the sting of conscience, and a constant sense of the everlasting displeasure of God, together with despair of any better condition, or the least relaxation, as a judicious writer observesⁱ. And besides, it is expressly said, in this scripture, *Thou wilt not leave my soul*; which shews, that though he might be destitute of the comfortable sense of God's presence, which occasioned him to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* yet he was not destitute of the supporting presence of God, nor separate from his love, which always redounded to his Person; tho' the effects of God's wrath, which he bore, might fill him with the greatest

uneasiness, from the afflictive view, which he had thereof in his soul. However, though the sense of this text must be thus qualified, if we suppose that it denotes Christ's sufferings in his soul before his death; yet it does not sufficiently appear that the Apostle speaks of his sufferings antecedent to it; because it is brought in as an argument, to prove that he should be raised from the dead, and accordingly his *flesh* is said to *rest in hope*; therefore we shall proceed,

2. To consider Christ's descent into hell, as contained in one of the articles of the *Creed*, that is commonly attributed to the *Apostles*, which is particularly referred to, in the *Answer* under our present consideration, wherein it is put after his death. Here something might have been premised concerning that *Creed* in general, and the reason of inserting this article in it: But this having been insisted on with great judgment by others^j, all that I shall add is, that, notwithstanding what we meet with in some fabulous and spurious writings, this *Creed* was not compiled by the Apostles, how consonant soever it be to the doctrines laid down by them; for we have no account given of it by any ancient writers before the *Fourth Century*, therefore it is of later date than either the *Nicene* or *Athanasian Creed*; the former of which was composed about the year of our Lord 325. the latter not long after it. In the *Nicene Creed*, there is no mention of Christ's descent into hell, though the *Athanasian Creed* inserts it; but there is no mention therein of his being buried. The words are these: He descended into hell, and the third day he arose from the dead; from whence some conclude, that nothing else is intended but his being buried, or continuing in the state of the dead, till his resurrection. Some think, indeed, that there was a marginal note in some copies of this *Creed*, to explain what is meant by his descending into hell, namely, that he was buried; which the compilers of the *Apostles Creed* afterwards thought to be a part of the *Creed* it self, and therefore they add, That he died, was buried, and descended into hell. But, passing by this critical remark, concerning the reason of the insertion hereof in this article, we shall proceed to consider how this is explained, by various writers, who treat on this subject. And,

^f Vid. *Wist.* in Symbol. Exercitat. 18. and *Pearson* on the Creed, Artic. 5. and *Parker* de descensu Christi ad Inferos.
^g Vid. *Institut.* Lib. II. cap. 16. §. 10.
^h Vid. *History* of the Apostles Creed.
ⁱ Acts ii. 27.
^j Vid. *Pearson* on the Creed, Artic. 5.

506 *How the Papists understand* CHRIST'S *Descent into Hell.*

(1.) The *Papists* and *Lutherans* assert that our Saviour descended locally into hell after his death, not to suffer any of the torments that are endured there, but to shew himself as a conqueror over those who are detained in it, and triumph over them. As for the *Papists*, they suppose, that he went also into a place, which they describe^a as a prison, where the souls of the Old Testament-saints were detained, as being incapable of entering into heaven, inasmuch as they had not a sufficient discovery of Christ and the gospel made to them, while they were here on earth; and therefore they were detained in this, which we may call a fictitious place, which they represent as being between heaven and hell; not, indeed, according to them, a place of torment, but they suppose it was such, in which they were destitute of the heavenly blessedness; and they add, that immediately after Christ appear'd among them, and manifested himself to them, they believed; in which sense they understand that scripture, where it is said, that *the gospel was preached to them that are dead*^a; and, upon this, he carried them with him into heaven. This opinion of Christ's descending locally into hell, is very absurd, and contrary to scripture; particularly,

1st. To what he says to the penitent thief upon the cross, *To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*^b; by which, doubtless, he means heaven, which is called *Paradise* in other scriptures^c.

The method which the *Papists* take to evade the force of this argument, is, by pretending that our Saviour speaks of his being with him in heaven, as he is there in his divine nature; or, since that appears to be so great a strain on the sense of the text, that very few will much regard it; they have another evasion, which is as little to the purpose, by pretending, that there ought to be a stop put after the words *to day*; and so the meaning is, that, now, at this time, I say unto thee, that thou shalt be with me in paradise, or heaven, when I ascend into it, after I have descended into hell, and that other place which I must go to, before I come to heaven: But this sense of the text is so evasive, that none, who read the scripture impartially, can suppose that it is just; and therefore nothing farther need be said to it.

2nd. It appears that Christ immediately

went into heaven, as to his soul, when he died upon the cross, from his last words, *Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit*; which having said, he gave up the ghost^d. This giving up himself to God, implies a desire that God would receive his spirit; even as *Stephen* said, with his dying breath, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*^e. Christ, in effect, desires that God would receive his spirit; and can we suppose this prayer to be unanswered, or that he was not immediately received into heaven?

We might farther have shewn how little ground they have to conclude that Christ went to preach the gospel to those, who, by reason of the darkness of the Old Testament-dispensation, were detained in prison, as being unfit for the heavenly state: But the falseness of this supposition has been consider'd elsewhere^f, and therefore we pass it over at present. And as for that scripture, which they bring in defence hereof, that Christ *went and preached to the spirits in prison*^g, it is plain, from the context, that the Apostle means nothing else thereby, but his sending *Noah* to preach to the old world, *who were disobedient*, and, for this, were sent into the prison of hell, *after the long-suffering of God had waited on them, while the ark was building*. How easy a matter is it for those, who regard not the analogy of faith, or the context of those scriptures, which they bring in defence of their wild absurdities, to pretend to prove any thing from scripture?

As to what they say concerning Christ's descending into hell, to triumph over the devils, and others, who were there plunged into that abyss of misery, this conjecture has no foundation in scripture. We read, indeed, of his *spoiling principalities and powers, and making a shew of them openly, triumphing over them*; but it was *in his cross*, not in hell^h; and elsewhere of his *destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*ⁱ: But it was not by going in his own Person into that place, where he is detained in chains of darkness; 'twas not by any thing done by him after his death, but, as it is express'd, *by death*, as he purchased that victory, which he obtained over him on the cross, which was the seat of his triumph, in this respect; and therefore there is no foundation to assert his local descent into hell.

^a This they call *Limbus Patrum*.
with 4. and Rev. ii. 7.

^b 1 Pet. iii. 19.

^c 1 Pet. iv. 6.

^d Luke xxiii. 46.

^e Coloss. ii. 15.

^f Heb. ii. 14.

^g Luke xxiii. 43.

^h Acts vii. 59.

ⁱ 2 Cor. xii. 2. compared

^j See Pag. 21, 22, 385.

(2.) The

(2.) The most probable opinion concerning Christ's descent into hell, which I cannot but acquiesce in, is what is observed in this *Answer*, as implying his continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day. The word *Hell*, indeed, in our *English* tongue, generally, if not always, signifies that place of torment, which they are adjudged to, who are for ever excluded from the divine favour: Thus 'tis said, concerning the rich man in the parable, that *in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments*^k: But the *Hebrew* and *Greek* words^l, which we often translate *Hell*, have not only that, but another sense affixed to them, as they sometimes signify *the Grave*; so our translators frequently render the word; as when *Jacob* speaks of *bringing down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave*^m; and elsewhere 'tis said, *The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up*ⁿ, and it is taken for the state of the dead: Thus *Jacob*, when he thought that his son *Joseph* was torn in pieces, without being laid in the grave, says, *I will go down into the grave unto my son*^o. There are many other places in which the *Hebrew* word is so render'd; and as for the *Greek* word, that, according to its proper derivation and signification, denotes the state of the dead, or the unseen state: Thus our Saviour, after death, continued in the state of the dead, his soul being separate from his body till the third day, when his state of humiliation was finished.

This leads us to consider Christ's state of exaltation.

QUEST. LI. *What was the estate of Christ's exaltation?*

ANSW. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.

QUEST. LII. *How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?*

ANSW. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having

seen corruption in death, of which it was not possible for him to be held, and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof, but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life, really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day, by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be Lord of quick and dead, all which he did as a publick Person, the Head of his church, for their justification, quickning in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

THE former of these *Answers* containing only a general account of what is particularly insisted on in some following *Answers*, we pass it over, and proceed to consider Christ, as exalted in his resurrection. And accordingly we may observe,

I. That he did not see corruption in death. Corruption, according to our common acceptation of the word, imports two things,

1. The dissolution of the frame of nature, or the separation of soul and body, in which sense every one that dies sees corruption; for death is the dissolution, or separation of the two constituent parts of man; which therefore the Apostle calls *the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle*^p. Now, when our Saviour is said to see corruption, it is not to be understood in this sense, because he really died.

2. It consists principally in the bodies being putrified, or turned into dust. In this sense, it is said, *Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*^q; which is explained in a following *Vers*, in which 'tis said, that *his flesh did not see corruption*^r, i. e. he did not continue long

^k Luke xvi. 23.
^l 2 Cor. v. 1.

^m Gen. xlii. 38.
ⁿ 1 Sam. ii. 6.
^o Gen. xxxvii. 35.

^p Acts ii. 27.

^q Verse 31.

enough in the state of the dead, for his body to be corrupted, which it would have been, without a continued miracle, had it lain many days in the grave.

If it be objected, that to lie two or three days in the grave, is sufficient to contract some degree of corruption; therefore Christ's body could not, in all respects, be free from corruption.

To this we answer, that there was a peculiar hand of providence, in keeping it from being corrupted, during that short space of time, in which it continued in the state of the dead, which was an indication of the great regard which God had to him, his sufferings therein being now at an end. But there may be another reason hereof assigned, inasmuch as the filth of sin is sometimes illustrated by things putrified and corrupted, to beget in us a detestation thereof; therefore God would not suffer the body of Christ to be corrupted; as his soul had not the least taint of moral corruption in life, it was not expedient that his body should have the least mark or emblem of it in death. And it was also necessary, that his body should not see corruption, by being turned into dust, as the bodies of all men will be; otherwise we could not have had so evident a proof, that the same body which died, was raised again from the dead, which will be farther insisted on, under a following *Head*, when we consider the reason why he rose again so soon as the third day.

II. It was not possible for our Saviour to be held any longer under the power of death; this is taken from *Acts* ii. 24. For the understanding whereof, let us consider,

1. That had he continued always under the power of death, it would have argued the insufficiency of his satisfaction, so that his obedience in life, and his sufferings in death, could not have attained the end designed thereby; and consequently the infinite worth and value thereof would, in effect, have been denied. Therefore the justice of God being fully satisfied, it could not refuse to release him out of prison, that is, to raise him from the dead.

2. It was not possible that he should be held any longer under the power of death, than till the third day; because the purpose and promise of God must have its accomplishment. And, indeed, he was given to understand, before he

suffered, that his body should be detained no longer in the grave; as he intimates to his followers, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*^c. This event, therefore, was proposed as a sign, and an appeal is made thereunto, for the confirmation of his mission and doctrine; therefore it was impossible, that he should be held any longer in the grave.

III. We are to prove, that Christ actually rose again from the dead. The two main proofs, necessary to support our faith herein, are, 1. A sufficient testimony given hereof by creatures. 2. A farther confirmation of it by miracles, which are a divine testimony. Both these we have; and it may be farther observed, that the great ends of his death and resurrection are fully obtained, as appears by daily experience; all which afford us unquestionable matter of conviction.

First, As to the former sort of testimony. It was attested by sufficient, undeniable evidence; as,

1. By two angels, who were sent from heaven, as the first witnesses thereof; they are described as being *in shining garments, who said, Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen*^d. They are called, indeed, *two men*, because they appeared in human form; but another Evangelist calls them *two angels*^e.

2. It was attested, by several men and women, who were his familiar friends and followers before his death, and saw and conversed with him, after his resurrection, and therefore had sufficient proof that it was he who suffered that was raised from the dead. And, lest the testimony of his Apostles should not be reckoned sufficient, though there were enough of them to attest this matter, he was afterwards seen by a greater number, namely, *Above five hundred brethren at once*^f. And surely, all these could not be deceived, in a matter of which it was necessary for themselves, as well as others, that they should have the fullest conviction.

Now that it was morally impossible, that his disciples, in particular, should be imposed on, will farther appear, if we consider,

(1.) That they were his intimate associates; it was for this reason, among others, that providence order'd that he should appear to, and converse mostly

^c John ii. 19.

^d Luke xxiv. 4—6.

^e John xx. 12.

^f 1 Cor. xv. 6.

The Credibility of the Witnesses to CHRIST'S Resurrection. 509

with them: Had he appear'd to others, who never knew him before, and told them that he was risen from the dead, though they could not question his being alive, whilst they conversed with him; yet they might doubt whether he was the same Person who died, and so was raised from the dead; and it can't well be conceived that such could receive a full conviction, as to this matter, without a miracle: But, when he appear'd to those who were intimately acquainted with him, before his death, the conviction is easy and natural; for,

If his countenance, or outward appearance, as much resembled what it was before his death, as ours after a fit of sickness does what it was before; then his aspect, or external appearance to them, would afford such matter of conviction, as very few pretend to gainsay; especially, considering it was but three days since they saw him, before he was crucified. But it may be objected to this, that his countenance was so alter'd, that it was hard to know him by it, in so much that *Mary*, one of his intimate acquaintance, when she first saw him, mistook him for the gardener^a; and it is said, that, *after this, he appear'd in another form unto two of them*^b.

As to the former of these scriptures, *Mary* might easily mistake him for another person, through surprize, and not looking stedfastly on him, as not expecting to see him. This, her mistake, therefore, may easily be accounted for, though we suppose his countenance not much to differ from what it was before his death.

As to the other scripture, which speaks of his appearing, *in another form*, to two of his disciples, as they walked into the country; this is mentioned, with some particular enlargement, by the Evangelist *Luke*, together with the conversation our Saviour had with them; and it is observed, that *their eyes were holden, that they should not know him*^c; and that afterwards *their eyes were opened, and they knew him*^d. May we not, from hence, suppose, that there was something preternatural, either in the change of Christ's countenance, to the end that, at first, they should not know him; or else, that there was some impress upon the minds of the disciples, that prevented their knowing him? If the former of these be supposed, as agreeable to St. *Mark's* words,

relating to his appearing in *another form*; this miracle will not give sufficient occasion for us to conclude, that our Saviour's countenance was so much altered, when, in other instances, he appeared to his disciples, that it was impossible that they should know him thereby: But, if this should be allowed; or, if it should be objected, that the most intimate friends may mistake the person whom they see, if there be nothing else to judge by, but the likeness of his countenance, to what it was before. Then let us add,

(2.) That our Saviour not only appeared to his disciples, but conversed with them, and brought to their remembrance what had passed between him and them before his death: Thus he says, *These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, &c.*^e Now, when a person not only discovers himself to others, but brings to mind private conversation that had before passed between them, at particular times and places; this leaves no ground to doubt whether it be the same person, or no. Therefore his appearing to, and conversing with his intimate, particular friends, and calling to mind former conversation held with them before his death, proves that he was the same Person that had lived before; and consequently they might be as sure that he was raised from the dead, as they were that he died.

3. Those persons, who, after his resurrection, were witnesses to the truth hereof to the world, were very worthy of credit; for,

(1.) They were of such a temper, that they would believe nothing themselves, but upon the fullest evidence; and this they had to such an extrem, as is uncommon; providence so ordering it, that we might, from thence, be more sure that we were not imposed on by their report. They were incredulous, even to a fault; for,

1st. Though they had sufficient intimation given them, that our Saviour would rise from the dead, at that time that he really did, and were also credibly informed by the women, who had an account hereof from the angels, that he was risen, yet 'tis said, *Their words seem'd to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*^f.

2^{dly}. After they had received a farther account of this matter, from those two disciples, who conversed with him, going to *Emmaus*, and therefore had sufficient

^a John xx. 14, 15.

^b Mark xvi. 12.

^c Luke xxiv. 16.

^d Ver. 31.

^e Luke xxiv. 44.

^f Chap. xxiv. 11.

510 CHRIST'S Resurrection attested by Men of known Integrity.

ground, from them, to conclude that he was risen from the dead; yet, when our Saviour, at the same time that they were reporting this matter to them, appeared in the midst of them, *they were terrified*, as if they had *seen a spirit*^c. This farther discovers how much they were disinclined to believe any thing, without greater evidence than what is generally demanded in like cases.

3^{dly}. The report given by the rest of the disciples to *Thomas*, concerning his resurrection, and his having appeared to them, and conversed with them, which was a sufficient ground to induce any one to believe it, was not, in the least, regarded by him, who determined, that unless *he saw in his hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, he would not believe*; in which matter he was afterwards indulged by our Saviour for his conviction. All these things are plain proofs that the disciples, who were to be witnesses of this matter, were not persons of such a temper, as that they might easily be imposed on, and therefore their report is more convincing to us.

(2.) They were men of an unspotted character, unblemish'd honesty and integrity, which is a very necessary circumstance to be regarded, in those who are evidences to any matters of fact: Their conversation was subject to the inspection of their most inveterate enemies, who, if they could have found anything blameworthy therein, would, doubtless, have alledged it against them, as an expedient, to have brought their persons and doctrines into disrepute, which would have had a tendency to sap the very foundation of the Christian religion; and the *Jews* need not have had recourse to persecution, or called in the aid of the civil magistrate to silence them, if they could have produced any instances of dishonesty, or want of integrity, in their character. The Apostle *Peter*, who was one of the witnesses to this truth, appeals to the world, in the behalf of himself and the rest of the Apostles, when he says, *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty*^f; and, indeed, their writings discover not only great integrity, but holiness, and therefore the same Apostle stiles them all, *Holy men of God*^g.

(3.) They could not be supposed to have the least prospect of advantage by deceiving the world, as to this matter; but, on the other hand, were to look for nothing else but the greatest degree of opposition, both from the *Jews* and the Heathen. The former, who had always been such enemies to their Lord and Master, would, doubtless, be so to them; and, besides this, they reckoned it their interest to oppose and persecute every one who propagated this doctrine, inasmuch as they apprehended, that, if the world believed it, it would fasten an eternal mark of infamy upon them; and they were also apprehensive, that it would *bring on them* the guilt of *his blood*, that is, the deserved punishment thereof^h. If any one should object, that they might have some view to their own interest, when they first became Christ's disciples, or expect some secular advantage, by being the subjects of his kingdom, as apprehending that it was of a temporal nature. This they had not any ground for from him. Besides, since his crucifixion, all expectations of that kind were at an end; and therefore their reporting that he was risen from the dead, if he had not been so, would have been to invent a lie, contrary to their own interest.

Moreover, they would herein not only have imposed on others, but have incur'd the divine displeasure, and ruined their own souls, the happiness whereof was equally concerned in the truth of their testimony with that of ours; and none can suppose that they ever appeared so desperate, as not to regard what became of them, either in this or another world.

Thus we have consider'd the testimony of those Apostles, who saw and conversed with Christ after his resurrection, together with their respective character, as witnesses hereof. And to them we have the addition of another witness to this truth, namely, the Apostle *Paul*, who saw him, in an extraordinary manner, after his ascension into heaven, and heard his voice, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me; I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*ⁱ; upon this occasion he says, concerning himself, *Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time*^k, that is, one who had this qualification for the apostleship, or his being a witness to Christ's resurrection, after that time, in which others were qualified to bear their testimony hereunto, that is,

^c Luke xxiv. 36, 37.
14—16.

^f 2 Pet. i. 16.
^k 1 Cor. xv. 8.

^g Ver. 21.

^h Acts v. 28.

ⁱ Chap. xxvi.

after

CHRIST'S Resurrection prov'd by the Conduct of his Enemies. 511

after his ascension into heaven. And we may observe, concerning this witness, that he was well known, by all the *Jews*, to have been one of the most inveterate enemies to Christianity in the world; which he frequently afterwards took occasion to mention, that so his testimony might be more regarded; and, indeed, nothing short of the fullest evidence, as to this matter, could induce him to forego his secular interest, and in common with the rest of the Apostles, to expose himself to the loss of all things, in defence of this truth.

And, now we are speaking concerning the witnesses to Christ's resurrection, and the Apostle *Paul*, as attesting this, from his having seen him in a glorified state, we may take notice of one more evidence hereunto, namely, the blessed martyr *Stephen*, who declared, in the presence of his enraged enemies, *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God*¹: He was, doubtless, one of the holiest, and most upright men in his day; and, when he gave this testimony, it is said, in the foregoing words, *He was full of the Holy Ghost*; and certainly the Holy Ghost would not suggest a falsity to him: And this he spake when ready to expire, and, at such a time, men are under no temptation to deceive the world; so that if, at any time, they are to be believed, it is then, when they are in the most serious frame, and thoughtful about that world into which they are immediately passing. Thus concerning the testimony of Christ's friends and followers to his resurrection.

And, to this, we might add the testimony of enemies themselves hereunto; they were forced to own this truth, tho' it was so much against their own interest, and made their crime, in crucifying him, appear so black and heinous. Thus we may observe, that when Christ was buried, the *Jews* desired *Pilate*, from the intimation which they before had received, that he was to rise again after three days, that his sepulchre should be made sure till that time, which was done accordingly; a stone rolled to the mouth thereof, and sealed, and a watch appointed to guard it; and these were *Jews*, as *Pilate* says, *Ye have a watch, go your way; make it as sure as you can*^m: He did not order Christ's friends and followers to watch the sepulchre, but his enemies; and 'tis observed, concerning them, that when the stone was rolled from

the door of the sepulchre, by the ministry of an angel, *the keepers*, or the watch which *Pilate* had set, *did shake, and became as dead men*ⁿ, or were ready to die with fear. This could not throw them into a sleep, for fear awakens, rather than stupifies the passions; upon this 'tis said, *Some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests the things that were done; and when they were assembled together, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away, while we slept; and, since this would render them liable to the governor's resentment, and some degree of punishment for their not attending their respective post, with that watchfulness that was necessary, they add, We will persuade him, and secure you; upon which 'tis said, They took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.* This is the most stupid and absurd method that could be taken, to discountenance the doctrine of Christ's resurrection; and, indeed, it contains a proof thereof: The soldiers, at first, reported matter of fact; but the evasion thereof confutes it self. Must we not suppose, that there were a considerable number that watched the sepulchre? Doubtless, they would take care to have several there present, lest those who might come to steal him away should be too strong for them: And, if there were several of them present, could they be all asleep at the same time? and could the tomb be opened, which they had made stronger than ordinary, and the stone rolled from it, and yet none of them be awaken'd out of their sleep? Besides, if they were asleep, their evidence, that Christ was, at the same time, stol'n away by his disciples, is too ridiculous to be regarded by any, who consider what sort of evidence deserves to be credited; for how could they know what was done when they were asleep? Thus concerning the testimony given to Christ's resurrection, both by angels and men. We proceed to consider,

Secondly, How it was confirmed by miracles, which are no other than a divine testimony. The former sort of evidence, indeed, is sufficient to convince any one, who does not give way to the greatest degree of scepticism: But yet we have farther proof of it; for, as the Apostle says, *If we receive the witness of men,*

¹ Acts vii. 56.

^m Matt. xxvii. 65.

ⁿ Chap. xxviii. 4.

512 Proved by Miracles. The Properties of his Body when raised.

the witness of God is greater. Now God himself has been pleased to set his seal to this truth, or to confirm it by the extraordinary testimony of miracles, which were wrought by the Apostles, which was, in some respect, necessary, that the faith of those, who were to be convinced thereby, might be properly divine, and therefore founded on greater evidence than that of human testimony, how undeniable soever it were: Thus 'tis said, that *with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*^p; and the Holy Ghost, in particular, by whose immediate efficiency these miracles were wrought, is said to be a witness hereunto: Thus the Apostles say, *We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him*^q; the meaning of which is, we are speaking and acting by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, confirming to you this great truth. And, indeed, those miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were an extraordinary means for the conviction of the world concerning this truth; which our Saviour gave his followers ground to expect, at this time, before his death, when he spake concerning the Spirit, *which was not before given*^r, that is, not in so great a degree, so as to enable them to speak with divers tongues, and work various sorts of miracles, beyond what they had done before; accordingly it is said, *The Holy Ghost was not yet, or, before this, given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified*. This Christ also promised them, immediately before his ascension into heaven, that *these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover*^s. These miracles are called *signs*, as ordained to signify or give a proof of Christ's resurrection; and they are said to be wrought by them, who had the faith of miracles, believed it themselves; and hereby induced others to believe it; and also they wrought them *in his name*, with a design to set forth his glory, which could not have been evinced hereby, had he not been risen from the dead.

And to this we may add, that all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which believers are made partakers of, are con-

vincing evidences of this doctrine. But this will be considered under a following *Head*, when we speak to the latter part of this *Answer*, respecting the fruits and consequences of Christ's resurrection, which the church, in all the ages thereof, experiences, whereby the work of grace is begun, carried on, and perfected in them; which leads us to consider,

IV. The properties of the body of Christ, as thus raised from the dead, as 'tis said, in this *Answer*, that the same body was raised again, with all the essential properties thereof, but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life.

1. It was the same body which suffer'd that was raised from the dead, otherwise it could not be called a resurrection: Thus the Apostle *Paul*, speaking concerning the general resurrection at the last day, compares it to the springing up of *seed*^t, that is sown in the ground, which, though it be very much alter'd, as to its shape, and many of its accidental properties, yet 'tis the same for substance that was sown; accordingly, *every seed hath its own body*; the matter is the same, though the form be different.

2. When it is said, that the body of Christ had the same essential properties which it had before his death, we are to understand hereby, that it was material, and endowed with the same senses that it had before, which were exercised in the same manner, though it may be in a greater degree.

3. It is farther observed, that it had not the same accidental properties which belonged to it before; for it was without mortality, and other infirmities of this life: Thus the Apostle speaks, concerning the resurrection of all believers, to this purpose, *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*^u; and it is said, in particular, concerning our Saviour, that, *being raised from the dead, he dieth no more*^x, that is, he was raised immortal. And as believers, after their resurrection from the dead, shall be deliver'd from the common infirmities of life, such as hunger, thirst, pain, sickness, and the like; much more may we conclude that our Saviour was so: But how far his human

^o 1 John v. 9.

^p 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38.

^q Acts iv. 33.

^r Ver. 42-44.

^s Chap. v. 32.

^t Rom. vi. 9.

^u John vii. 39.

^x Mark xvi. 17, 18.

CHRIST raised from the Dead the third Day. The Reasons of it. 513

nature was changed, as to all the properties thereof, it is not for us to pretend to determine, nor ought we to be too inquisitive about it; nevertheless, we may conclude, that though it was raised incorruptible and immortal, and exempted from the common infirmities of this life; yet it was not, while here on earth, clothed with that lustre and glory which was put upon it, when he ascended into heaven; the reason of which might probably be this, that he might converse with men, or that they might be able to bear his presence, which they could not have done, had his body been so glorious, as it is now at present, since his ascension into heaven.

V. It is farther observed, that Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, that is, he continued in the state of the dead, from the evening of the sixth day, to the morning of the first, which is the Christian sabbath: Thus the day on which Christ died is said to be *the preparation, and the sabbath drew on*^v; which another Evangelist explains, and says, *It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath*². The reason why the day before the sabbath is so called, is, because it was the day wherein they prepared every thing that was necessary for the solemnity of the day following, and gave a dispatch to their worldly affairs, that they might not be embarrassed therewith, and that, by fore-thought and meditation on the work of that day, they might be better prepared for it. This was on the sixth day of the week, and Christ died in the evening, not long before sunset; and it is also said, that he rose again from the dead *when the seventh day was past, very early in the morning on the first day of the week*³; so that our Saviour continued in the state of the dead a part of the sixth day, the whole seventh, and a part of the first day of the week; upon which account he is said to *rise again on the third day*^b, that is, the third day, inclusive of the day of his death, and that of his resurrection. The learned Bishop Pearson, in his marginal notes on the fifth article of the Creed, illustrates it by a tertian, or third-day ague, which is so called, though there be but one day's intermission between the

paroxysms thereof, and so the first and third day are both included in the computation. This is farther illustrated by him and others, who treat on this subject, viz. that the scripture often speaks of a number of days, inclusive of the first and last; as when 'tis said, *When eight days were accomplished, our Saviour was circumcised*^c; including the days of his birth and circumcision, between which six days intervened^d. Thus our Saviour continued three days in the state of the dead, inclusive of the first and last; or, he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

We shall now consider what reasons may be assigned why providence order'd that Christ should continue three days, and no longer, in the state of the dead.

1. It seems agreeable to the wisdom of God that there should be some space of time between his death and resurrection, that so there might be a sufficient evidence that he was really dead, since much depends on our belief thereof. He might have breathed forth his soul into the hands of God one moment, and received it again, as raised from the dead, the next: But God, in wisdom, order'd it otherwise; for, had he expired, and rose from the dead, in so short a time, it might have been questioned whether he died or no; whereas his lying in the grave till the third day, puts this matter beyond all dispute.

2. It was agreeable to the goodness and care of providence that our Saviour should not continue too long in the state of the dead: Had he continued several years in the grave, there could not have been an appeal to his resurrection, during all that space of time, to confirm the faith of his people, concerning his mission. God would not keep his people too long in suspense, whether it was he that was to redeem *Israel*; nor would he too long delay the pouring forth of his Spirit, or the preaching of the gospel, which were designed to be defer'd till Christ's rising from the dead; and it seems most convenient that he should soon rise from the dead, that is, on the third day, that the world might have a convincing proof of his resurrection, while his death was fresh in their memories, and the subject-matter of the discourse of all the world.

^v Luke xxiii. 54.

² Mark xv. 42.

³ Chap. xvi. 1, 2.

^b 1 Cor. xv. 4.

^c Luke ii. 21.

^d This observation is of use for the explaining the sense of several scriptures, which contain a seeming contradiction between them: Thus, in Luke ix. 28. 'tis said, *About eight days after these sayings, Jesus took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray*; whereas Mark says, in Chap. ix. 2. that this was done *after six days*; Luke speaks of the eight days, inclusive of the first and last; Mark speaks of eight days, exclusive of them both, which is but six days.

514 CHRIST did not lie three whole Days and Nights in the Grave.

And they, having been told of this beforehand, were, or ought, to have been in expectation of this wonderful and glorious event; and consequently it would be an expedient for their greater conviction.

Object. To what has been said concerning Christ's rising again on the third day, so as that he lay but one whole day in the grave, and a part of two days, it is objected, that he is said, in *Matt. xii. 40.* to be *three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*, which includes a longer time than what is before mentioned; therefore he was crucified on the fifth day of the week, not on the sixth; and it is also contrary to what has been said concerning his being crucified on the preparation before the sabbath.

Answer. In answer to this objection, let it be consider'd,

1. That it cannot be denied, according to the scripture-account of time, that the measure of a day contains the space of time, from one evening to the next, which is twenty four hours. This we call a natural day, the night being the first part thereof, and not the morning, according to our computation, as we reckon a day to contain the space of time from one morning to the next. The reason why the *Jews* thus begin their day, is, because it is said, *The evening and the morning were the first day*^e; and the sabbath day was reckoned to continue the space of time, from the evening of the sixth day, to the evening of the seventh, viz. from sun-set to sun-set; as 'tis said, *From even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath*^f. This farther appears, from what is said concerning our Saviour's going into Capernaum, and, on the sabbath day, entering into the synagogue, and teaching; whereas it is said, in a following Verse, *When the sabbath was over, they brought unto him all that were diseased and possessed with devils; and the city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, &c.*^g; from whence it appears, that the sabbath was over at sun-set that day; for the *Jews*, thinking it unlawful to heal on the sabbath day, as they expressly say elsewhere, would not bring those who had diseases to be healed till the sabbath was past.

2. When a whole natural day, consisting of twenty four hours, is spoken of in scripture, it is generally called a day

and a night, or an evening and a morning. The *Jews* have no compound word to express this by, as the *Greeks*^h have: Thus 'tis said, *Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed*ⁱ. The word which we render *Days*, in the *Hebrew*, signifies, as our marginal reference observes, *Evening Morning*, or so many spaces of time, each of which consists of evening and morning; and elsewhere 'tis said, that *Moses* was upon the mount *forty days and forty nights*^k, that is, forty of those spaces of time, which we call days, each of which make a day and a night; so that a day and a night, according to the *Hebrew* way of speaking, imports no more than a day; therefore, when our Saviour is said to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, it is an hebraism, which signifies no more than three days, or three of those spaces of time, each of which, being compleated, consists of a day and a night.

3. It is a very common thing, in scripture, for a part of a day to be put for a day, by a *Synecdoche* of the part for the whole; therefore a part of that space of time, which, when compleated, contains day and night, or the space of twenty four hours, is called a day; therefore that which is done on the third day, before it is compleatly ended, is said to take up three days in doing: Thus *Esther* says, *Fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go unto the king*^l; whereas 'tis said, after this, that on the third day *Esther* put on her royal apparel, and stood in the court of the king's house^m; therefore she could not be said to fast three whole days, but a part thereof; for, before the third day was ended, she went to the king. Therefore a part of three days is put for three days, or that which is said to be done after three days, or three days and three nights, which is all one, that may be said to be done on the third day, tho' not compleatly ended. Therefore our Saviour may be said to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, that is, a part of those spaces of time, which, if compleated, would have contained three days and three nights.

VI. Christ raised himself from the dead by his own power. Here let it be consider'd,

^e Gen. i. 5.
ⁱ Dan. viii. 14.

^f Lev. xxiii. 32.

^g Mark i. 21. compared with *Ver.* 32—34.

^k Exod. xxxiv. 28.

^l Esther iv. 16.

^m Chap. v. 1.

^h This they call *νυχθήμερον*.

CHRIST raised himself. How the Socinians understand it. 515

1. That no power, but what is divine, can raise the dead, since it is a bringing back the dissolved frame of nature into the same, or a better state than that in which it was before its dissolution, and a remanding the soul, which was in the hand of God, that it may be again united to its body, which none can do, but God himself. Accordingly the Apostle mentions it as a branch of the divine glory, and God is represented, as he *who quickneth all things*ⁿ; therefore the body of Christ was raised by divine power: Thus the Apostle says, *This Jesus hath God raised up*^o; and, when he mentions it elsewhere, he makes use of a phrase that is uncommonly emphatical; he wants words to express it, when he speaks of *the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*^p.

2. Since the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are God, as has been observed under a foregoing *Answer*^q, it follows, that this infinite power belongs equally and alike to them all, and therefore all these divine Persons may be said to have raised Christ's body from the dead. That the Father raised him, no one denies that speaks of his resurrection; and the Apostle expressly says, that *he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father*^r; and 'tis farther said, that he raised himself from the dead: Thus he tells the *Jews*, speaking of the temple of his body, *destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*^s; and that the Holy Ghost raised him, seems to be implied in that expression, in which 'tis said, *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*^t, that is, the Spirit, by this act of divine power, declared him to have been the Son of God, and to have finished the work he came about; and elsewhere he is said to *be quickned by the Spirit*^u.

3. Christ, by raising himself by his own power, declared that he was the Son of God, that is, not only a divine Person, which his sonship always implies, but his mission and authority to act as Mediator; and also that he had accomplished the work that he came into the world about.

As to what our Saviour says, concerning his raising himself by his own power; the Socinians apprehending this to be an argument tending to overthrow the scheme

they lay down, who deny his divinity, are forced to make use of a very sorry evasion, when they pretend to give the sense of that scripture before mentioned, *Destroy this temple, and, after three days, I will raise it up*. They suppose, that the meaning is only this, that the Father put life into his dead body, and united it to the soul, and, after that, he lifted himself up out of the grave, which is certainly a very jejune and empty sense of the words: Is it so great a matter for a Person, who was quickned by divine power, to lift up himself from the grave, in which he lay? In this sense, any one may be said to raise himself up, as well as Christ, or any one might raise the dead after this, by taking him by the hand, and lifting him up from the ground. This shews how much men are sometimes put to it to support a cause that is destitute of solid arguments for its defence. According to this method of reasoning, the whole world may be said to raise themselves at the last day, when God has put life into their dead bodies: But certainly more than this is implied in Christ's raising himself up, inasmuch as it is opposed to his body's being destroy'd, or the frame of nature's being dissolved in death; therefore he certainly intends that he would exert divine power, in raising himself from the dead, and hereby declare himself to be a divine Person, or the Son of God.

VII. We are next to consider the effects of Christ's resurrection, either as they respect himself, or his people.

1. As to what concerns himself. This was a demonstrative evidence that he had fully satisfied the justice of God, or paid the whole price of redemption, which he had undertaken to do; for hereby he was released out of the prison of the grave, not only by the power, but the justice of God, and received a full discharge; and accordingly was, in this respect, justified, and a full proof given that the work of redemption was brought to perfection.

It is also observed, that hereby he conquer'd death, and *destroy'd him that had the power of it*, to wit, *the devil*^x, and so procured to himself a right to be acknowledged as *the Lord, both of the dead and the living*^y. This is, in some respects, different from that universal do-

ⁿ 1 Tim. vi. 13.

power that is great, even to an hyperbole.

^r Rom. i. 4.

^o Acts ii. 32.

^u 1 Pet. iii. 18.

^p Eph. i. 19, 20. ὑπεράλλων μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ,

^q See Quest. IX, XI.

^x Heb. ii. 14.

^r Rom. vi. 4.

^y Rom. xiv. 9.

^s John ii. 19.

§ 16 CHRIST's own and his People's Concern in his Resurrection.

minion which he had over all things, as God, which was the result of his being the Creator of all things, and was not purchased or confer'd upon him, as the consequence of his performing the work which he came into the world about: I say, this dominion, which we are considering, is what belongs to him as Mediator; and it includes in it a peculiar right which he has, as Mediator, to confer on his people those blessings which accompany salvation; and his right to give laws to his church, defend them from their spiritual enemies, and bestow all the blessings on them, which were promised to them in the covenant of grace, and also in his ordering all the affairs of providence to be subservient thereunto. Had he not designed to redeem any of the race of mankind, he would have had a dominion over the world, as God, the Judge of all; a right to condemn and banish his enemies from his presence: But he could not be said to exercise dominion in such a way, as it is display'd, with respect to the heirs of salvation; for that would have been inconsistent with his divine perfections. Had he not died, and rose again, he would, indeed, have had a right to have done what he would with his creatures; but as he could not, without this, have redeemed any, so he could not confer, upon a peculiar people, that possession, which he is said hereby to have purchased.

2. The effects of Christ's resurrection, which respect his people, consist more especially in four things.

(1.) Their justification is owing hereunto. As we are said sometimes to be justified by his death, or *by his blood*^a, so elsewhere we are said to be justified, both by his death and resurrection, in different respects, *Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again*^b; by which some understand, that Christ, by his death, paid the debt which we had contracted, to the justice of God; and, by his resurrection, he received a discharge, or acquittance, in their behalf, for whom he died, and rose again; so that when he was discharged, his people might be said to be discharged in him, as their publick Head and Representative. This is well express'd in our large *English Annotations*^c, viz. that "Our justification, which was begun in his death, was perfected in his resurrection."

"Christ did meritoriously work our justification and salvation, by his death and passion; but the efficacy and perfection thereof, with respect to us, dependeth on his resurrection. By his death, he paid our debt; in his resurrection, he received our acquittance, *Isai. liii. 8. Being taken from prison, and from judgment*. When he was discharged, we, in him, and together with him, received our discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins;" which is very agreeable to what is said in this *Answer*, that he did all this as a publick Person, the Head of his church. Nevertheless, there is another notion of our justification, which consists in our apprehending, receiving, or applying his righteousness by faith, which, as will be observed in its proper place^d, cannot, from the nature of the thing, be said to be before we believe.

(2.) Another effect of Christ's resurrection, is our quickning in grace; as it is said, *When we were dead in sins, he hath quickned us together with Christ*^e. This implies either that his death, being the procuring cause of all inherent grace, begun in regeneration, and carried on in sanctification; his resurrection was the first step taken in order to his applying what he had purchased; and that afterwards we are raised, as the consequence thereof, from the death of sin, to a spiritual life of holiness; or else it denotes that communion which believers have with Christ in his resurrection, as well as his death, as he is the Head and they the members; which is agreeable to that peculiar mode of speaking, often used by the Apostle Paul, who, in several places of his *Epistles*, speaks of believers, as crucified, dead, and buried, risen, and ascended into heaven, and sitting at God's right hand, in heavenly places, in, or with Christ^f.

(3.) This is also a means for our support against our enemies, whose utmost rage can extend it self no farther than the grave. They, for whom Christ died, and rose again, shall obtain a glorious resurrection and eternal life with him; and therefore he advises his people not to be afraid of them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do^g; which will farther appear, if we consider another effect of Christ's resurrection, viz.

(4.) That they are hereby assured of their resurrection from the dead at the last

^a Rom. v. 9.

^b Chap. viii. 34.

^c See the notes on Rom. iv. 25.

^d See Vol. II. *Quest.* LXX, LXXII.

^e Eph. ii. 5.

^f See *Pag.* 371, 458.

^g Luke xii. 4.

Of CHRIST's *Ascension*, and *sitting at the right Hand of God*. 517

day. Christ's resurrection is, as it were, the exemplar and pledge of theirs, as hereby he conquer'd death in his own Person; so he gives them ground to conclude, that this *last enemy*, which stands in the way of their compleat blessedness, *shall be destroy'd*^h; accordingly 'tis said, that he is *risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept*ⁱ: But this will be farther consider'd, under a following *Answer*^k.

QUEST. LIII. *How was Christ exalted in his ascension?*

ANSW. Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having, after his resurrection, often appeared unto, and conversed with his Apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel, to all nations; forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our Head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue, till his second coming at the end of the world.

QUEST. LIV. *How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?*

ANSW. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that, as God-man, he is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth, and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies, furnisheth his

ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

IN the former of these *Answers*, we have an account of Christ's ascension into heaven; in the latter, of his sitting at the right hand of God, which contains a circumstance of glory, that was immediately consequent hereupon. And accordingly we are led,

First, To consider Christ's ascension into heaven. Here we may observe,

I. The distance of time between his resurrection and ascension, and what he did during that interval. It is expressly said, that *he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them*, viz. the Apostles, *forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*¹. Some of the Evangelists are more particular on this subject than others: But, if we compare them together, we may observe,

1. That our Saviour, during this interval, did not converse freely and familiarly with the world, as he had done before his death, during the exercise of his publick ministry; and, indeed, we cannot learn, from any account given by the Evangelists of this matter, that he appeared, so as to make himself known, to any but his friends and followers. He might, 'tis true, have appeared to the *Jews*, and thereby confuted that lye, which they so studiously propagated, that his disciples came by night and stole him away, and consequently that he was not risen from the dead: But he thought, as he might well do, that he had given them sufficient proof, before his death, that he was the *Messiah*; and, since he designed that his resurrection should be undeniably attested, by those who were appointed to be the witnesses thereof, it was needless for him to give any farther proof of it. And besides, his enemies being wilfully blind, obstinate, and prejudiced against him, he denied them any farther means of conviction, as a punishment of their unbelief, therefore he would not appear to them after his resurrection. And, indeed, had he done it, it is probable, considering the malicious obstinacy and rage which appeared in their temper, that they would have persecuted him again, which it was not convenient that he should submit to, his state of humiliation being at an end.

^h 1 Cor. xv. 26.

ⁱ Ver. 20.

^k See Quest. LXXXVII.

¹ Acts i. 3.

518 CHRIST appeared to, and conversed with, his Apostles.

2. He did not continue all the forty days with his Apostles; nor have we ground to conclude that he abode with them in their houses, as he did before his death, nor did he eat and drink with them, excepting in two or three particular instances, mentioned by the Evangelists^m, the design of which was to prove, that, after his resurrection, he had as true an human body, with all the essential properties thereof, as he had before his death; and therefore was not, as they supposed him to be, when first they saw him, a *Spectrum*.

All the account we have of his appearing to his friends and followers, is, that it was only occasionally, at such times as they did not expect to see him. At one time, he appeared to the two disciples going to *Emmaus*, and made himself known to them, when they came to their journey's end, and then withdrew himself in an instant; afterwards, we read of his appearing to the Apostles, when they were engaged in social worship, on the day of his resurrection, and also, that he appeared to them again on the first day of the following weekⁿ, and another time at the sea of *Tiberias*^o; and it is expressly said, after this, that *this was now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead*^p. And, besides this, we read elsewhere of his being *seen of above five hundred brethren at once*^q; which was probably in *Galilee*, where his followers generally lived, which was the country in which he mostly exercised his publick ministry before his death. This seems to have been appointed as a place of general rendezvous, if we may so express it, as he says, *After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee*^r; and the angel gives the same intimation, *Go your way, tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you*^s. Now this intimation being, as is more than probable, transmitted to his followers, five hundred of them waited for him there, and accordingly he appeared to them. All these appearances were only occasional; he principally designing thereby to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, and to give his Apostles, in particular, instruction concerning some things, which they were unapprised of before. Thus concerning the time which Christ con-

tinued here on earth, in which he sometimes appeared to his disciples.

We now proceed to consider what he imparted to them, during his stay with, or at those particular times when he appeared to them. Here we cannot certainly determine any thing farther than the account we have thereof in scripture, in which, as was before observed, it is said, that *he spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*. By the *kingdom of God*, I humbly conceive, is meant either that glorious state and place to which he was to ascend, where they should, at last, be with him, which was a very useful and entertaining subject, and they could not but be happy in hearing those things from him; or else, we are hereby to understand the gospel-state, which, in the New Testament, is often called *the kingdom of God*, or *the kingdom of heaven*. And accordingly, as he designed they should be his ministers, whom he would employ in preaching the gospel, and thereby promoting the affairs of his kingdom; it was necessary that they should receive instructions concerning this matter, without which they could do nothing for the promoting his interest in the world; or, at least, they must have a particular direction from the Holy Spirit relating thereunto, or else they would have no warrant to give instructions to the church concerning this new dispensation. We have no ground to doubt but that they had the Spirit's direction in every thing that they laid down for the church, as a rule of faith, or practice, afterwards: But this they seem not to have had, while our Saviour was with them; therefore this, as is more than probable, was a part of what he discoursed with them about, as he order'd them to teach those to whom they were sent to *observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them*^t.

(1.) We have sufficient ground to conclude, that he gave them direction concerning the observation of the first day of the week, as the Christian sabbath. He had told them, before his death, that he was *Lord of the sabbath*^u; and now we may suppose that he more eminently discover'd himself to be so, by changing the day from the seventh to the first day of the week. That they had this intimation from him, concerning the Christian sabbath, seems probable, because it was observed by them, in the interval between

^m Luke xxiv. 41-43. John xxi. 13.

ⁿ Ver. 14.

^o Mark ii. 28.

^p 1 Cor. xv. 6.

^q John xx. 19, compared with Ver. 26.

^r Mark xiv. 28.

^s Chap. xvi. 7.

^t Chap. xxi. 1.

^u Matt. xxviii. 20.

The Things CHRIST conversed about with his Apostles. 519

his resurrection and ascension; and we read, more than once, of his giving countenance to their observance of it, by his presence with them; whereas, at this time, the Holy Ghost was not poured forth upon them; therefore their practice herein seems to be founded on some intimation given them by our Saviour, during his continuance with them forty days; tho' perhaps this might be confirmed to them afterwards, by extraordinary revelation from the Holy Ghost.

(2.) It was in this interval that our Saviour gave them a commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and instituted the ordinance of Baptism^{*}, which differs very much from the commission he had before given to his twelve disciples, when he ordered them *not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*[†]; whereas now none are excluded, but their commission must be exercised throughout the whole world, where-ever they came; and, together with this, he promised *to be with them*, so as to assist and succeed them in their ministry, *to the end of the world*. Moreover, he enjoined them *to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high, waiting there for the promise of the Father*, or for their being baptized by the Holy Ghost, which privilege they should soon after receive[‡]. This was a very necessary advice which our Saviour gave them; for, though they had a commission to preach the gospel, they wanted those qualifications for it, which they were to receive from the Holy Ghost. They were also to tarry at Jerusalem, after they had received extraordinary gifts from the Holy Ghost, till they had an intimation given, in what parts of the world they should begin the exercise of their publick ministry.

(3.) Tho' it be not particularly mentioned in the evangelical history, yet, it is not improbable, that our Saviour spake to his disciples concerning the nature of the gospel-church, and its government, and how they were to exercise their ministry therein; what doctrines they should preach, and what success should attend them; and also what they should suffer for his sake. Why may we not suppose that he spake of these things to all his Apostles, when he condescended to tell Peter, *by what death he should glorify God*[§]? And their knowledge of ma-

ny of these things was necessary for the right discharge of their ministry, which they were to begin at Jerusalem, where the first church was to be planted; and it can hardly be supposed that he would only give them a commission to preach the gospel, without some instructions relating thereunto: But, since this is only a probable argument, let me farther add, that it is certain they afterwards had particular direction from the Holy Ghost relating hereunto, who was given, after Christ's ascension into heaven, to lead them into all truth, or to impart, by them, to the gospel-church, an infallible and standing rule of faith and practice.

II. After our Saviour had continued forty days on earth from his resurrection, and, in that time, conversed with his Apostles of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; 'tis observ'd, that he ascended into heaven, or, as it is here express'd, visibly went up into the highest heavens. There are two phrases, in scripture, whereby this is set forth: Thus 'tis said, *He was taken up*, and *he went up*^b; which variation of expression is used by the Holy Ghost, as some think, to denote two different respects, or circumstances, attending his ascension. *His going up*, signifies, that he ascended into heaven by his own power, pursuant to that right which he had to that glory; as he says elsewhere, *Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory*^c? And when 'tis said, *he was taken up* into heaven, that signifies the Father's act in exalting him. As he sent him into the world, so he took him out of it, into a better, when he had finished his work upon earth. This variety of expression we find used in several other scriptures: Thus 'tis said, that *he ascended up on high*^d, *enter'd into heaven*^e, and so put in his claim to the heavenly glory; and, on the other hand, 'tis said, that *he was received up into heaven*^f, and consequently his claim to it admitted of, and accordingly he was exalted to this honour *by God's right hand*^g, as what was due to him, as the consequence of his sufferings.

But, that we may more particularly consider what it was for Christ to ascend into heaven,

I. We are not to understand hereby that his divine nature was translated from earth to heaven, or changed the place of its

^{*} Matt. xxviii. 19. [†] Chap. x. 5, 6. [‡] Luke xxiv. 49. compared with Acts i. 4, 5. [§] John xxi. 19.
^b Acts i. 9, 10. ^c Luke xxiv. 26. ^d Eph. iv. 8. ^e Heb. ix. 24. ^f Mark xvi. 19. ^g Acts ii. 33.
 residence;

520 CHRIST *ascended really, and visibly, from Mount Olivet.*

residence; for that is contrary to the omnipresence thereof. When-ever a change of place is ascribed to it, it respects not his essential, but his manifestative presence. Though it was united to the human nature, yet it was not confined to it, or limited by it; and though it display'd its glory therein, in one way, whilst he was here on earth, and, in another, when he ascended into heaven; yet, consider'd as to its essential glory, it fills all places; in which respect it is said, that he was in heaven whilst here on earth^a.

2. When we say, that Christ ascended into heaven in his human nature, this is not to be understood in a metaphorical sense, as though it denoted only his being advanced to a more glorious state, than he was in before his death; since heaven signifies a glorious place, as well as state. Were it only to be taken in the former sense, it might, for the same reason, be said, that there are no saints, or angels, locally in heaven, since the metaphor might as well be applied to them, as to our Saviour, which is directly contrary to the known acceptation of the word in scripture. Moreover, that his ascending into heaven denotes a change of place, as well as state, is evident, inasmuch as, though his state of humiliation was over immediately after his resurrection; yet he says, concerning his human nature, that, during his abode forty days here on earth, though raised from the dead, *I am not yet ascended to my Father*ⁱ; therefore,

3. His ascension into heaven is to be understood, in the most proper and known sense of the word, infering a change of place, as well as state, denoting his being carried from this lower to the upper world, in his human nature, and so entering into that glorious place, as well as triumphant state. This is called, *The heaven of heavens*^k; which gives us ground to conclude, that the word *Heaven* is taken in various senses in scripture: Thus it is sometimes taken for the air; and accordingly *the fowls*, that fly in it, are said to *fly in the midst of heaven*^l; and sometimes it is taken for the clouds, and so we read of the *rain*^m, or *dew of heaven*ⁿ, as coming down from thence; and sometimes it is taken for the stars, as we read of the *stars of heaven*^o; but, besides all these senses of the word, it is taken for the seat of the blessed, the throne of God, where he manifests himself, in a glorious manner, to his saints

and angels. To this place Christ ascended; and, in this respect, 'tis not only said, that he *went* into heaven; but that *he was made higher than the heavens*^p, or that *he ascended far above all heavens*^q: Thus it is said, in this *Answer*, that he went up into the highest heaven.

Now that Christ ascended into heaven, and that in a visible and glorious manner, is evident, from the account we have hereof in scripture, which, together with the circumstances that went immediately before it, is what is next to be consider'd. Accordingly we read, in scripture,

That when the eleven disciples were assembled together, he came with a design to take his leave of them; and, after having *opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures*, and had farther confirmed their faith, by applying them to himself, and had concluded all those necessary instructions, which he gave them, *he led them out as far as Bethany*; and then it is said, in *Luke xxiv. 50—53. He lift up his hands and blessed them; and, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried into heaven*. But, inasmuch as this relation seems somewhat different from the account given of it by the same inspired writer, in *Acts i. 12.* who observes, that, when Christ had ascended into heaven, in the sight of his disciples, *they returned to Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey*; and therefore it is plain that he ascended into heaven from that mountain; how then could he ascend thither from *Bethany*? It is observed, that *Bethany* was about fifteen furlongs from *Jerusalem*, and the mount of *Olives* a sabbath day's journey; so that *Bethany* and the mount of *Olives* seem to be almost a mile distant from each other: If Christ ascended from one of these places into heaven, how could he then be said to ascend from the other?

The answer that may be given to this seeming inconsistency, between these two accounts of the place from whence Christ ascended into heaven, is, that the town of *Bethany* was situate at the foot of the mount of *Olives*; therefore that part of the mountain that was nearest to it, might have two names, to wit, *Olivet*, which was the name of the whole mountain, or *Bethany*, which denomination it might take from the adjoining village.

Or, if this be not sufficient to account

^a See Page 164.

ⁱ Gen. xxvii. 28.

^j John xx. 17.

^k Chap. xxii. 17.

^l Psal. cxlviii. 4.

^m Heb. vii. 26.

ⁿ Rev. xix. 17.

^o Eph. iv. 10.

^p Deut. xi. 11.

^q John xi. 18.

Remarks on what preceded CHRIST's Ascension into Heaven. 521

for the difficulty before mentioned, we may suppose, that when the Evangelist says, in one of these places, that our Saviour *led them out as far as Bethany*, he does not say he was taken up into heaven from thence; but, after he led them there, *he blessed them, and, while he blessed them, he was parted from them*; therefore it is probable, that, when he was come to *Bethany*, he gave them an intimation that he should soon be received into heaven; and, while he was going from thence, or going up the mount of *Olives*, he continued blessing them; and, when he was come up to that part of the mount from whence he ascended, he *lift up his hands*, and confer'd his last benediction on them, upon which he *was parted from them, and a cloud received and convey'd him to heaven*; so that there is no inconsistency between the two scriptures, as to the place from whence he ascended. It is farther observed, that his ascension was visible; *they looked stedfastly towards heaven as he went up*.

From this account of Christ's ascension into heaven, we may make two or three remarks.

1. As to the place from whence he ascended, which was the mount of *Olives*, it may be observed, that it was the same place to which he often retired, when he was at *Jerusalem*, to converse with God in secret. Here it was that he was in his agony, in which he sweat great drops of blood, when having a very terrible apprehension of the wrath of God, which he was to bear, as a punishment due to our sin, which was the most bitter part of his sufferings; and therefore here he chose to begin his triumphs, as from hence he ascended into heaven. And hereby he seems, as it were, to give an intimation to his people, that they ought to set the glory, which they shall be advanced to, against the sufferings of this present life, as a ground of encouragement and support to them. That place, which, at one time, discover'd nothing but what was matter of distress, and anguish of spirit; at another time opened a glorious scene of joy and happiness: This mountain, which before had been a witness to that horror and amazement, in which our Saviour was, when in the lowest depths of his humbled state, now represents him as entering immediately into his glory.

The place in the mountain, from whence he ascended, is not particularly mention'd;

nor is there any mark of sanctity put on it; though the *Papists*, with a great deal of superstition, pretend to discover the very spot of ground from whence our Saviour ascended, and impose on those who will believe them, by shewing them the print of his feet, which, they suppose, he left behind him upon the mountain; in which place they have erected a church, open a top, to signify his ascension into heaven: But this is little better than a fabulous conjecture. It is an easy matter to find some hollow places in any mountain; but to say that any such small valley was made by our Saviour's feet, as a memorial of his ascending from thence, is nothing else but an imposition on the credulity of ignorant persons, without scripture warrant.

2. From what is said, concerning Christ's conversing with his disciples about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, we may observe, that the work he was engaged in, just before his ascension into heaven, was of such a nature, that it is a very desirable thing for a person, when called out of the world, to be found so doing. Our Saviour's whole conversation, while on earth, had, some way or other, a reference to the kingdom of heaven, and had a tendency to bring his people there; and this was the last subject that he conversed with them about.

3. What is said concerning his blessing them when he was parted from them, was agreeable to what is mentioned concerning *Elijah*, whose translation into heaven, was a type of Christ's ascension thither, concerning whom 'tis said, that he bade *Elisha ask what he should do or desire of God for him, before he was taken from him*. As the great design of our Saviour's coming into the world, was to be a publick blessing to his people; so the last thing he did for them, was blessing them, and that either by conferring blessedness upon them, as a divine Person, or else by praying for a blessing for them as man, whereby he gave them a specimen of the work which he is engaged in, in heaven, who ever lives to make intercession for them; and it is farther observed, that *he lift up his hands, and blessed them*. Sometimes when persons blessed others, they did it by laying their hands upon them: This *Jacob* did, when he blessed the sons of *Joseph*, as a sign of his faith, which was herein express'd, that blessings should descend from God upon

^f Acts i. 10.

^g Luke xxii. 39.

^h Ver. 44.

ⁱ 2 Kings ii. 9.

^j Gen. xlviii. 14.

522 *The Necessity of CHRIST's Ascension, and the Ends thereof.*

them. And, when many persons were blest'd at the same time, instead of laying their hands on them, they sometimes lifted them up; accordingly *Aaron* is said to lift up his hands towards the people, and bless them^a: So *Christ* lifted up his hands when he blessed his disciples, as an external sign of his lifting up his heart to God, while he prayed for the blessings which they stood in need of. Thus concerning *Christ's* ascension into heaven.

There is one thing more mentioned in this *Answer*, which I cannot wholly pass over, namely, that he did this as our Head. The headship of *Christ* is a circumstance often mentioned by the Apostle *Paul*, who supposes him to stand in this relation to his people, in every thing that he did for them as Mediator, in which he is consider'd as a publick Person, the Representative of all his elect, who acted in their name, as well as for their interest; which leads us to consider,

III. That it was necessary that *Christ* should ascend into heaven after he had finished his work on earth; for this was an accomplishment of what was foretold concerning him. This the Psalmist mentions, in a very beautiful and magnificent way, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in^a*; and elsewhere 'tis said, *Thou hast ascended on high^b*; which the Apostle *Paul* particularly applies to his ascension into heaven, as a prediction thereof^c; and this was also signified by that eminent type of it, which was equivalent to a prediction in the High Priest's entering into the holiest of all, which the Apostle also speaks of, as shadowing forth the same thing^d.

Moreover, this was foretold by our Saviour himself, whilst he was here on earth, before and after his death, when he tells his disciples, *I go to prepare a place for you^e*; and, *I ascend to my Father, &c.^f*; so that there was really an appeal to his ascension into heaven, as well as to his resurrection, for the proof of his mission, and his relation to God, as his Father; therefore it was necessary that he should ascend thither. It was also necessary, as this was a glory promised him, as the consequence of his sufferings; and accordingly *it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect, through, or after his sufferings^g*.

It was also necessary that he should ascend visibly into heaven, or that his Apostles, who were to be witnesses thereof, as well as of his resurrection, should see him go thither; for this was necessary to be believed, as well as the other, and whatever they were to give their testimony to, must be the result of the fullest conviction; and therefore, that they might convince the world that he was ascended into heaven, they must be qualified to tell them, that they saw him ascend there.

Object. If it be objected, that, since they might give their testimony that he rose again from the dead, though they did not see him rise, they might attest the truth of his ascension, though they had not seen him ascend into heaven.

Ans. To this I answer. 'Tis true, their witness that he was risen from the dead, was sufficient though they did not see him rise, inasmuch as they saw him after he was risen, and had undeniable proofs that he was the same Person that suffer'd; yet there is a circumstance attending his ascension into heaven, which renders it necessary that they should see him ascend there, though it was not necessary that they should see him rise from the dead, in order to their giving conviction to the world as to this matter; for he did not design that they should see him, after his ascension, till his second coming to receive them into heaven, and then their testimony will be at an end; and therefore it was necessary that they should see him ascend. The Apostle *Paul*, 'tis true, at his conversion, saw him cloathed with his heavenly glory in his exalted state; but this was a singular and extraordinary instance, which he gave his other disciples no ground to expect; therefore, that they might want no qualification that was necessary, in order to the fulfilling their testimony, he ascended into heaven visibly, in the presence of all his Apostles.

IV. There are several great and valuable ends of *Christ's* ascension, mentioned in this *Answer*, some of which were glorious to himself, and all of them advantageous to his people. Accordingly 'tis observ'd,

1. That he triumphed over his enemies; as the Apostle says, *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive^h*; which is an allusion to the solemn triumphs

^a Lev. ix. 22.
^e John xiv. 2.

^a Psal. xxiv. 9.
^f Chap. xx. 17.

^b Psal. lxxviii. 18.
^g Heb. ii. 10.

^c Eph. iv. 8.
^h Eph. iv. 8.

^d Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9, 11, 24.

CHRIST exalted in sitting at the right Hand of GOD. 523

of princes, after having obtained some remarkable and compleat victories. Now the empire of Satan was demolish'd, his prisoners ransomed, and accordingly deliver'd from his power; and the gospel, which was to be preached throughout the world, was a publick *proclamation of liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound*¹.

2. Christ ascended into heaven, that he might receive gifts for men. The scripture seems to distinguish between Christ's purchasing and his receiving gifts for men; the former was done by his death; the latter was consequent on his ascension into heaven. There are two expressions used relating to this matter, namely, that of the Psalmist, *Thou hast received gifts for men*², and the Apostle's reference thereunto, when he says, *He gave gifts unto men*³, that is, he received gifts for men, with a design to give them to them, which he did, after his ascension into heaven, when there was a very great effusion of the Spirit on the gospel-church erected, and furnished with a variety of ministers, such as *Apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*⁴; which is a farther allusion to the custom of princes in their triumphs, on which occasion they extend their royal bounty to their subjects.

3. Christ ascended into heaven to *prepare a place* for his people, as he told them he would do, before his death⁵; and accordingly he is said to *have enter'd there, as the Fore-runner*⁶; and so he took possession of those heavenly mansions in their name, to which he designs, at last, to bring them.

4. 'Tis farther observed, that he ascended into heaven, to raise up their affections thither, and to induce them to *set their affections on things above*⁷. That place is always most dear to us which is our home, our rest, where our best friends reside; our thoughts are most conversant about it, and we are inclined to desire to be with them there; therefore Christ's being in heaven, together with all his saints, is a motive to all believers to have their *conversation in heaven*, which is the character given of them by the Apostle⁸.

5. The last thing observed in this An-

swer is, that Christ designed to continue in heaven till his second coming at the end of the world; as 'tis said, *Whom the heavens must receive, till the time of the restitution of all things*⁹; and then he will come again into this lower world, not to reside or fix his abode here, but to receive his people into heaven, where they shall be with him to all eternity, as 'tis said, *So shall we ever be with the Lord*¹⁰. Thus concerning Christ's exaltation in his ascension into heaven; we now proceed to consider him,

Secondly, As exalted in sitting at the right hand of God, which is a glory that was confer'd upon him after his ascension into heaven. This is a figurative way of speaking, which the Holy Ghost condescends to make use of; and it cannot be understood in any other sense, since God, being a Spirit, is without body, or bodily parts; and, being immense, *the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him*¹¹; therefore it does not denote the situation of Christ's human nature in some particular part of heaven, but his being advanced to the highest honour there. As the *right hand*, amongst men, is used to signify some peculiar marks of honour confer'd on them who are seated there; thus when *Bathsheba* went in unto king *Solomon*, he caused a seat to be set for her, and she sat at his *right hand*¹²: So when Christ is said to *sit on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*¹³, it denotes the highest degree of honour confer'd on him, as Mediator; and particularly his sitting there denotes,

1. That glorious rest which he enjoys, after having sustained many labours and afflictions in this world; a sweet repose, and perfect deliverance from all those things which formerly tended to make him uneasy, while in his way to it.

2. It also implies that honour and supream authority which he is invested with. Others are represented as servants, standing in the presence of God; accordingly 'tis said, *Thousand thousands minister'd unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him*¹⁴; but Christ is distinguished from them all by this mark of regal dignity, in that he *sits and rules upon his throne*¹⁵: Thus the Apostle says, concerning him, that, having *purged our sins*, he *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, intimating, that he was

¹ *Isai. lxi. 1.* compared with *Luke iv. 18.*

² *John xiv. 2.*

³ *1 Thess. iv. 17.*

⁴ *Zach. vi. 13.*

⁵ *Heb. vi. 20.*

⁶ *1 Kings viii. 27.*

⁷ *Psal. lxxviii. 18.*

⁸ *Coloss. iii. 2.*

⁹ *Chap. ii. 19.*

¹⁰ *Eph. iv. 8.*

¹¹ *Phil. iii. 20.*

¹² *Heb. viii. 1.*

¹³ *Ver. 11, 12.*

¹⁴ *Acts iii. 21.*

¹⁵ *Dan. vii. 10.*

524 Of CHRIST's Intercession, and the Necessity thereof.

made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they^a; which he farther proves, when he says, *To which of the angels, said he, at any time, sit on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool^b?*

3. It also signifies the perpetuity, or eternal duration of his mediatorial glory and authority, as to *fit*, in scripture, often signifies, to abide: But this has been before consider'd, when we spake concerning the eternity of Christ's kingdom^c. There are other things, mentioned in this *Answer*, which are the fruits and effects of Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, to wit, the exercise of his power over all things, in heaven and earth; and, as the consequence thereof, gathering and defending his church, subduing their enemies, and furnishing his ministers with gifts and graces: But these will be more particularly insisted on, under a following *Answer*, in which we shall be led to speak concerning the special privileges of the visible church^d. Therefore what we are next to consider is, that Christ, as sitting at the right hand of God, makes intercession for his people.

QUEST. LV. *How doth Christ make intercession?*

ANSW. Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers, answering all accusations against them, procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

THE intercession of Christ, as has been observed, under a foregoing *Answer*, is a branch of his priestly office, and is founded on his satisfaction. The reason why it is mentioned in this place, after we have had an account of

his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, is, as I conceive, because the Apostle lays down these heads in the same order, when he speaks of them, *'Tis Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us^e*. In speaking concerning Christ's intercession,

I. We shall consider the necessity thereof; and that,

1. Because this was foretold and typified. It was predicted, concerning him, that he should *make intercession for the transgressors^f*; and elsewhere God the Father is represented, as saying to him, *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heavens for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession^g*; which words, though they contain the form of a command, are, doubtless, a prediction relating to this matter, whereby it is intimated, that the glorious success of the gospel, when preached to the world, should not only be the purchase of his death, but the consequence of his intercession; and what *Elihu* speaks of an advocate, as pleading the cause of a poor afflicted person, and saying, *Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom*; and as it is farther added, *He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable to him, and he shall behold his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousness^h*, seems rather to be understood of Christ than any other; for it is most agreeable to the character given him of a *Messenger with him*, and an *Interpreter one among a thousand*, and his being *gracious unto him*, when he thus makes intercession for him.

Moreover, when the Psalmist represents him, as saying, concerning his enemies, *I will not take up their names into my lipsⁱ*, it plainly intimates his design to intercede for all others, namely, for his people. And that *David* does not here speak in his own person, but in the Person of Christ, is very evident, because it was his duty, in common with all mankind, to pray for his enemies; and therefore he speaks of another sort of intercession, *viz.* Christ's, which is different from that which one man is obliged to make for another. This appears, in that, in some following *Verses*, we have a prediction of his rising from the dead before he saw corruption, as it is particularly

^a Heb. i. 3, 4.

^b Ver. 13.

^c See Pag. 478.

^d See *Quest.* LXII, LXIII.

^e Rom.

viii. 34.

^f Isai. liii. 12.

^g Psal. ii. 8.

^h Job xxxiii. 23, 24, 26.

ⁱ Psal. xvi. 4.

applied

We need an Advocate. CHRIST alone is fit to be, and is one. 525

applied to him in the New Testament^k.

And to this we may add; that as Christ's intercession was expressly foretold by the prophets; so it was typified by the High Priest's entering every year into the holy of holies, with blood and incense, to appear before God in the behalf of the people, as making intercession for them. This is expressly applied to Christ, as the Anti-type, and his *entering into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us*^l.

2. Christ's intercession was necessary, as the condition of fallen man required it. Some have been ready to conclude, that, by reason of that infinite distance there is between God and man, it was necessary that there should be an Advocate to procure for him a liberty of access to God: But that does not evidently appear; for as we have no ground to conclude, that the holy angels, though infinitely below him, are admitted into his presence, or made partakers of the blessings, that are the result thereof, by the intervention of an Advocate, or Intercessor, with him, in their behalf; so man would not have stood in need of a Mediator, or Advocate, to bring him into the presence of God, or plead his cause, any more than he would have needed a Redeemer, had he not fallen: But his present circumstances require both; it is necessary therefore that Christ should intercede for him.

(1.) Because, being guilty, he is render'd unworthy to come into the presence of God, and actually excluded from it; as the Psalmist says, *Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity*^m. This punishment is the immediate consequence of guilt, whereby the sinner is exposed to the curse of God, whose holiness obliges him to order such to depart from him. Moreover, there is a servile fear, or dread of him, as a consuming fire that attends it; upon which account, he desires rather to fly from, than to have access to him; therefore he needs an Intercessor to procure this privilege for him.

(2.) There are many accusations brought

in against him, as a ground and reason why he should be excluded from the divine favour, and not have any saving blessings applied to him, which must all be answer'd; and therefore there is need of an Advocate to plead his cause.

II. None but Christ, our great Mediator and Advocate, is fit to manage this important work for us. We cannot plead our own cause; for guilt stops our mouths, as well as renders us unworthy of any blessing from God. And it is certain that no mere creature can do this for us; for none can speak any thing in their favour, who are under a sentence of condemnation, unless an expedient were found out to bring them into a state of reconciliation with God, for that would tend to the dishonour of his justice; and none can plead for any blessing to be bestowed on them, but he who was able to make atonement for them, which no mere creature could do, since the greatest price, that he can give, is far from being of infinite value: But such a price as this Christ has laid down, as has been before consider'd, in speaking concerning his priestly office; and therefore he alone is fit to be an Advocate, or Intercessor, for his people; which leads us to consider,

III. That Christ is his people's Advocate, or makes intercession for them. This appears from several scriptures: Thus 'tis said, *He ever liveth to make intercession for them*ⁿ, and *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*^o.

1. Christ is represented as making intercession for his people before his incarnation; as when 'tis said^p, *The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan*^q.

2. After his incarnation, he interceded for his people in his human nature; and while he was here on earth, he did it agreeably to that state, in which he then was, though the efficacy of his intercession depended on his completing the work of our redemption, which was not done before he arose from the dead; in which respect, there was something prophetic in his intercession then, as well as when he is represented as making

^k Acts ii. 31.

^l Heb. ix. 7, 9. compared with *Ver.* 11, 12, 24.

^m Psal. v. 4, 5.

ⁿ Heb. vii. 25.

^o 1 John ii. 1.

^p Zach. iii. 2.

^q Christ did not intercede for his church before his incarnation *formally*, inasmuch as it is inconsistent with his divine nature to pray; prayer being an act of worship; but *virtually*, by which we are to understand that all the blessings which the church then enjoyed, were founded on the sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, he designed to offer; and this is, by a *Prolepsis*, represented as though it had been then done, in the same sense as he is elsewhere said to be *the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world*. See *Pag.* 481.

526 How CHRIST'S Intercession differs from our Prayers.

intercession before his incarnation; therefore,

3. As the price of redemption was not fully paid till his state of humiliation was at an end, upon which account he is generally stiled a consummate Mediator from that time, when he was *made perfect through sufferings*^r; so he was, after that a compleat Advocate, or Intercessor, for his people; in which respect, he is said, in a way of eminency, *to make intercession for them*, after his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, in his glorified state, in which he manages their cause with an advantageous plea, which he could not use, while here on earth; for then he had not accomplished his work of redemption, and therefore could only plead the promise made to him, upon condition of his bringing that work to perfection, which then was only begun. And also whatever act of worship he then performed, it was agreeable to that state of humiliation, in which he was: But now he is in heaven, and consequently his work of redemption finished; he pleads his absolute and actual right to receive those blessings for his people, and apply them to them, which God before had promised in the covenant of redemption; and this he does with those circumstances of glory, that are agreeable to his exalted state, as sitting at God's right hand, and having such visible marks of the divine favour, that nothing can be denied him that he asks for. 'Tis true, while he was here on earth, he says, *Father, I thank thee, that thou bearest me always, &c.*^r; which he might well say, inasmuch as there was sufficient security, or ground to conclude, that he could not fail in the work which he was engaged in, so as to leave it incomplete. How much more may he say this, when he is in his exalted state, and pleads as one that has brought the work, he came into the world about, to perfection?

And to this let me add, that he will intercede for his people for ever, as he shall always continue in this exalted state. And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise; if Christ's presence in heaven be a full and comprehensive plea for all the blessings we enjoy or hope for; then so long as he shall abide there, he will intercede for us, and that will be for ever. That this may farther appear, let it be consider'd; that the sacrifice, which he offer'd for his people while on earth, procured for them not only the blessings they enjoy

in this world, but those that they shall be possessed of in heaven. And as his being received into heaven was a convincing evidence, that what he did and suffered, before he went thither, was accepted, and deemed effectual to answer all the valuable ends thereof; so his continuance there will remain a standing and eternal evidence thereof; which contains in it the nature of a plea. But this respects not only the blessings they now enjoy, but all that they hope for, therefore their eternal happiness is founded thereon; which is what the Apostle principally intends, when he says, *He ever liveth to make intercession for them*^t.

IV. We shall now consider the difference between Christ's intercession for us with the Father, and our praying for our selves, or others, and that when we address our selves either to men or God.

1. When we intercede with men to obtain some favour from them, we hope, either by our arguments, or importunity, or, at least, by our interest in them, or some obligations, which we have laid them under, to persuade them to alter their minds, as we are treating with mutable creatures. But this is by no means to be applied to Christ's intercession, in which he deals with an unchangeable God, who has, in various instances, declared his love to, and willingness to save all those, whose salvation he intercedes for; in which sense we are to understand our Saviour's words, *I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you*^u.

Moreover, when we intercede with men for any favour, we don't usually present any price paid by us for the benefit we intercede for; but Christ, in interceding for his people, presents the merit of his obedience and sacrifice, which is the only thing that renders it effectual.

2. When we pray to God for our selves, or others, this differs from Christ's intercession, in that we present our selves and our petitions to him in the name of Christ, and hope for a gracious answer, in the virtue of his mediation and righteousness; so that our access to God is mediate, Christ's immediate. We plead what he hath done for us, as our Surety, and not any thing done by our selves; but he pleads what was done only by himself. We acknowledge, in all our supplications, that we are unworthy of

^r Heb. ii. 10.

^t John xi. 41, 42.

^u Heb. vii. 25.

^v John xvi. 26, 27.

the least of his mercies ; whereas he appears in our behalf before God, as one who is worthy to have that granted which he pleads for.

V. We shall now consider how Christ makes intercession ; and it is observed, that he does this,

1. By his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth. This is taken from the practice of attornies, or advocates, in civil courts, when a cause is to be tried, in which case the plaintiff or defendant does not appear himself, but his advocate appears for him : Thus Christ *appears in the presence of God for us*. This virtually includes in it the nature of a plea. For the understanding of which, let it be consider'd, that as God cannot, consistently with the glory of his divine perfections, save any of the fallen race of mankind, upon any other condition, than that satisfaction should be given to his justice, and such a price of redemption paid, as tended to secure the glory of his holiness, and other perfections ; so he has, in his eternal covenant with the Son, promised, that if he would perform this work, then he would bring his people to glory. Christ, on the other hand, undertook it with this encouragement, that, when he had perfected it, he should be received into glory, as a publick testimony that justice was fully satisfied ; therefore his being set at God's righthand, in heavenly places, as the consequence thereof, is a convincing evidence, to angels and men, that his work is brought to perfection. And accordingly his being there, or appearing in heaven, contains in it the nature of a plea ; more especially if we consider him as appearing there as our Head and compleat Redeemer, who has finished the work which he came into the world about. This I take to be the principal *Idea* in Christ's intercession.

If it be farther enquired, whether he makes use of a voice, as we do, when we pray for our selves, or others ? I dare not deny that he does, since he made use of words when he pray'd for his people on earth ; which was a short specimen of his intercession for them in heaven : But yet it must be consider'd,

(1.) That it is impossible for words to express the particular necessities of every one, whom he appears for in heaven, at the same time ; and to suppose that Christ

represents the case of one at one time, and another at another, as we do when we pray for different persons, is hardly sufficient to answer all the valuable ends of his intercession, for all his people at all times ; neither are we to suppose, since the human nature of Christ is not omniscient, that he has therein a comprehensive view, at once, of all the particular necessities of his people, for that would be to confound his human nature with his divine ; and it is only in the human nature that he prays, though the efficacy of this prayer is founded on the infinite value of his oblation performed therein, which was the result of its union with the divine, as has been before observed^x ; therefore,

(2.) When Christ is said to make use of words in interceding for his people, these are principally to be consider'd, as expressive of their wants and infirmities in a general way ; so that a few comprehensive words may include in them the general *Idea* of those things that are common to them all. In this respect, I am far from denying that Christ, in interceding for his people, makes use of words ; but, when we consider his being in heaven, or appearing in the presence of God in the behalf of his people, as virtually containing (as was before hinted) the nature of a plea, this extends it self to every particular necessity of those for whom he intercedes at all times.

2. It is farther observed, that Christ, in making intercession, declares his will to have the merit of his obedience and sacrifice applied to all believers : Thus he says, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, &c.*^y, in which he does, as it were, make a demand of what is due to him, in right of his purchase ; and so it is distinguished from a supplication, or entreaty, that God would bestow an unmerited favour. All our prayers, indeed, are supplications, that God would bestow upon us undeserved blessings ; but Christ's prayer is a kind of demand, of a debt due to him, pursuant to the merit of his obedience and sufferings. Moreover, this mode of speaking may be farther understood, as containing an intimation of his divine will, to have what he purchased, in his human nature, applied to his people ; though this is rather a consequence of his intercession, than, properly speaking, a formal act thereof.

^x See Pag. 402.

^y John xvii. 24.

528 *What CHRIST's Intercession procures. How 'tis to be improv'd.*

3. It is farther observed, that he intercedes for his people, by answering all accusations that may be brought in against them: Thus the Apostle^a supposes a charge to have been brought in against God's elect, and that they were under a sentence of condemnation; and shew how this sentence is reversed by the death of Christ; and the charge answered by his intercession. If we consider the many things laid to the charge of God's elect, either by the world, Satan, or their own consciences, these are supposed to be either false or true. What is falsely alledged, Christ, as their Advocate, answers, by denying the charge, and undertakes to vindicate them from it: But when the thing laid to their charge is undeniably true; as, for instance, that they are sinners, and have thereby contracted guilt, and deserve to be for ever banished from the presence of God; this Christ undertakes to answer, no otherwise than by pleading the merit of his obedience and satisfaction, whereby they obtain remission of sins and a right to eternal life.

VI. Christ, by his intercession, procures for his people many invaluable privileges, three of which are mentioned in this *Answer*.

(1.) Quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings. This supposes, that the best believers on earth, by reason of the remainders of indwelling corruption, are liable to many sinful infirmities; as it is said, *There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not^a*; and, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us^b*. And these have a proportionable degree of guilt attending them; and this guilt has a tendency to make the conscience uneasy, unless we have an Advocate, who has a sufficient plea to alledge in our defence: But such an one is Christ, and consequently his intercession procures for us this privilege; *If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous^c*.

(2.) He also procures for us access, with boldness, to the throne of grace. As sin renders us guilty; so guilt exposes us to fear, and a dread of coming before the throne of God, as a God of infinite holiness and justice: But, when he is represented as sitting on a throne of grace,

as the consequence of Christ's death and intercession, our servile fear is removed, and we are encouraged, as the Apostle says, *to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need^d*.

(3.) Another consequence of Christ's intercession is, the acceptance of our persons and services; first, of our persons, then of our services; as it is said, *The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering^e*. The acceptance of our persons is a branch of our justification, which is founded on Christ's sacrifice and intercession, as it is said, *He hath made us accepted in the beloved^f*; and the acceptance of our services, which are performed by faith, supposes the removal of the guilt that attends them, by reason of our sinful infirmities: Thus God's people are called an *holy priesthood*, and said *to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ^g*.

VII. Let us consider how Christ's intercession ought to be improved by us. And,

1. It is a great remedy against those desponding or despairing thoughts, which we are sometimes liable to, by reason of the guilt of sin, when charged on our consciences; in which case, we should give a check to our selves, and say, with the Psalmist, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me^h?* Why should we entertain such sad and melancholy thoughts, especially if Christ intercedes, on our behalf, for the forgiveness of all our sins; and our sincere repentance, together with the exercise of those other graces, that accompany it, will afford us an evidence of our interest in this privilege, which will be an expedient to raise our dejected Spirits, and fill us with the joy of his salvation.

2. Christ's intercession is to be improved by us, as an encouragement to prayer; and, as a farther ground, to conclude, that our poor, broken, imperfect breathings, shall be heard and answered for his sake, who pleads our cause.

3. This is a great inducement to universal holiness, when we have ground to conclude, that those services, that are performed to his glory, shall be accepted, upon the account of his intercession.

^a Rom. viii. 33, 34.
^c Gen. iv. 4.

^a Eccles. vii. 20.

^f Eph. i. 6.

^g 1 Pet. ii. 5.

^b 1 John i. 8.

^h Psal. xlii. 10.

^e Chap. ii. 1.

^d Heb. iv. 16.

QUEST. LVI. *How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?*

ANSW. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day, in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

OUR Saviour, being in his exalted state, is to continue at the right hand of God, till he has finished the remaining part of his work, in the application of redemption; and, by his Spirit, in the methods of his providence and grace, brought in the whole number of the elect; after which follows another branch of his mediatorial glory, when he shall come again to judge the world at the last day, which is the subject-matter of this *Answer*. For the understanding of which, let it be consider'd,

I. That though he was, before this, solemnly invested with a power of exercising judgment, and is continually distributing rewards and punishments in the course of his providence; yet the full manifestation of his glory, as Judge of quick and dead, and that in a visible manner in his human nature, is defer'd till the last day. Though he be now known by the judgments that he executes, which are oftentimes attended with wonderful displays of his divine glory; and, though the eternal state of all men be fixed by him at their death, at which time a particular judgment is pass'd on them by him, as the Apostle says, *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment*¹; yet this is done without those external and visible marks of glory in his human nature, with which he shall appear in the end of time. This is stiled, *The last day*²; and, in that re-

spect, that measure of duration, which we generally call time, will be ended, and another, which is distinguished from it, which, by reason of its having no end, is called eternity, shall commence; not that it is like the eternity of God, without succession: But some think it differs from time, principally in this, that it shall not be described by the same measures that it now is; nor shall the motion of the heavenly bodies produce those effects which they do, in the frame of nature, whereby the various changes of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, follow each other in their respective courses.

Some, indeed, think that this is called a *Day*, in the same sense as the present season, or dispensation of grace, is sometimes called the sinner's *day*³, or the day of God's patience, and long-suffering. And when this shall be at an end, and the gospel, which is compared to a glorious light, that shines therein, shall be no longer preached, the end thereof being fully answered, this may well be stiled the last day, when Christ shall come to judgment.

II. This glorious appearing of Christ to judge the world, is set in opposition to that part of his state of humiliation, in which he was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, and is designed to aggravate the crime of those, at whose tribunal he stood, who, though he then told them of this matter, namely, that *hereafter they should see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*⁴; yet they believed him not. And this may also be consider'd, as set in opposition to all that contempt, which his name, interest, and gospel, daily meet with, in an ungodly world, whereby he is, as it were, judged and condemned afresh, and the unjust sentence that was pass'd upon him, in effect, approved of; from all which, Christ shall be for ever vindicated, when his glory shines forth in a most illustrious manner, as calling the whole world to stand at his tribunal, and rewarding every one according to their works.

III. The time when Christ shall thus come to judge the world, is unknown, either by angels or men; and, indeed, our Saviour himself, while here on earth, speaks of this, as a secret, that had not

¹ Heb. ix. 27.

² John. xi. 24. Chap. xii. 48.

³ Luke xix. 42.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 64.

530 *The Time when, and Glory with which, CHRIST shall appear.*

been made known to him, as man^a; and the reason why God has thus concealed it, is, because he would not give occasion to any to indulge the least degree of carnal security, (for the same reason that he has not made known to us the term, or bounds of life) but that we may be always ready for his coming. Therefore we cannot but reckon it an instance of unwarrantable presumption in several *Jewish* writers, and some of the *Fathers* after them^o, to suppose, as they do, that the world shall continue *six thousand* years, from the creation; and that, as it was made in six days, and the seventh ordained to be a sabbath, this had a mystical signification; and accordingly, in its application to this matter, a day answers to a thousand years; or that, as the world was two thousand years without the written word, or law of God, and, after that, two thousand years under the law, so the days of the *Messiah* shall continue two thousand years, and then follow the eternal sabbatism at Christ's second coming. As for the *Jews*, who speak of this matter, their unbelief is condemn'd out of their own mouths; since they do, as it were, concede, that the time in which the *Messiah* was to come, was that in which he actually appear'd; notwithstanding, this is a groundless conjecture, so far as it respects the end of the world; and, indeed, it is an entering into a secret, which is altogether hid from mankind.

IV. We are now to consider that glory with which Christ shall appear, when he comes to judge the world. Accordingly 'tis said, he shall come in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, and with other circumstances, that will be very awful and tremendous.

1. He shall come in his own glory, by

which we are to understand, that the glory of his divine nature shall shine forth, or be demonstrated in a more illustrious manner, than it has hitherto been. When he was here on earth, this glory had, as it were, a veil put on it, by reason of the low and humbled state of his human nature: But, when he shall come again in his exalted state, it will never be a matter of doubt to any, whether he be God incarnate, or no. And to this we may add, that there will be many things done by him, when he comes to judgment, which will be eminently the effects of his divine power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and faithfulness, whereby the glory of his divine nature will farther appear, in determining the final state, both of angels and men.

2. He is also said to appear in his Father's glory. For the understanding of which, let us consider,

(1.) That whatever work he is engaged in, or glory he receives, as Mediator, it takes its rise from the Father; it was he that called him to perform it, *sanctified, and sent him into the world*, furnished him with an human nature, united to his divine Person. From him it was that he received a commission to lay down his life, and to take it up again; and it is he who hath appointed the day in which he will judge the world; and, pursuant to this decree and appointment, he will come to perform this glorious work.

(2.) Every thing that he does, as Mediator, is refer'd to the glory of the Father; as he says, *I honour my Father*^p; and therefore this work, which is, as it were, the laying the top stone of the glorious fabrick of our salvation, will tend eminently to set forth the Father's glory, who laid the foundation stone thereof.

(3.) Whatever work he performs for the honour of the Father, he receives

^a Mark xiii. 32.

^o As for the *Jewish* writers, they mention a tradition taken from one *Elias*, which, some think, refers to a spurious writing, that went under the name of the prophet *Elijah*: But this they leave uncertain; neither do they signify whether it was a written or an oral tradition; nor do they intimate when, or where, this *Elias* lived. However, the tradition was received by many of them. It is mentioned in the *Talmud* in Tract. Sanhedrim, cap. xi. §. 29. Edit. à Cocc. *Traditio est domus Elie: Sex mille annos durat mundus. Bis mille annis inanitas & vastitas. Bis mille annis Lex. Denique bis mille annis dies Christi. At vero propter peccata nostra & plurima & enormia abierunt ex his, qui abierunt.* And the same is mentioned in another *Talmudic* Treatise, call'd, *Avoda Sara*, [Vid. eund. edit. ab Edzard. cap. I. pag. 65. cum ejusd. Annot. pag. 244. & seq.] And *Manasseh Ben-Israel* asserts the same thing, [Vid. ejusd. de Creat. Probl. 25.] Other writers, among them, improve upon this conjecture, and pretend, that as the sun was created the fourth day, so the *Messiah* was to come, after 4000 years, by which they appear to be self-condemned. However, as an expedient to disembarass themselves, they all pretend, that Christ's coming is defer'd for their sins; which evasion is too weak to ward off the evidence which we have for the truth of Christianity. That several of the *Fathers* imbibed this notion, concerning the world's continuing 6000 years, according to the number of the days of the creation, is evident. *Lactantius* begins his *Millennium* then, and supposes, that the *thousand* years, from thence to the end of time, answer to the seventh day, or sabbath of rest, [Vid. Lactant. de Vit. Beat. §. 14.] *Augustin*, who does not give into the *Millennium*, supposes, that time will end with the 6000 years, which answers to the sixth day of the creation; and then, according to him, follows an eternal sabbatism, [Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XX. cap. 7.]

^p John viii. 49.

Other Circumstances of Glory with which Christ shall appear. 531

from him, a testimony of his highest approbation of him therein. When he was here on earth, as the Apostle says, *He received from the Father honour and glory; when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*^a. This testimony was given to him at his baptism, and transfiguration in the Holy Mount; the latter of which the Apostle more immediately refers to, as appears by the following words; therefore we may conclude,

(4.) That since his coming to judgment will be the most illustrious part of his mediatorial work, he will have the most glorious testimony from the Father; and, indeed, his receiving the faints to heaven, who are stiled, *Blessed of his Father, who shall inherit the kingdom, which he had prepared for them, from the foundation of the world*^r, will be a standing monument of his approbation of him, or well-pleasedness with whatever he has done in order thereunto; and therefore he may well be said to come in the glory of his Father.

V. He is farther said to come in the glory of his holy angels. This, indeed, is to be understood in a sense different from that of his appearing in his own glory, or that of his Father's; for the angels are said rather to behold and admire his glory, than to confer any branch thereof upon him. However, they are described as attending him in his coming, as it is said, *He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him*^t; and accordingly he will appear in the glory of his angels, as they shall be his retinue, and bear a part in the solemnity of that day, whereby they not only acknowledge his rightful authority to engage in this glorious work, but their willingness to attend him in any part thereof, in which he thinks fit to employ them, as ministering spirits, in subserviency to the proceedings of that day. And this leads us to consider that glorious solemnity, together with some things that will be done, preparatory to Christ's judging the world. Accordingly 'tis said,

VI. That he shall come with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God, which are the Apostle's words^u; and he adds, that this shall be attended with the resurrection from

the dead, and the change of those *who being found alive, shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air*; and elsewhere he says, *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*^v; and our Saviour speaks of a throne's being erected; and that *when he shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, he shall sit on the throne of his glory*^x. We also read of the gathering of the whole world before him, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked, which is said to be done by the ministry of angels^y; these things will immediately go before Christ's judging the world: But since it is expressly said, in this *Answer*, that he shall come with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trumpet of God, this we shall particularly consider. And,

I. When he is said to come with a shout, and with the voice of the arch-angel, it does not seem probable, that by a *shout*, is meant an inarticulate sound, as the word is sometimes applied, when used by us, as signifying that joy and triumph which is express'd by those who shout for victory. Notwithstanding the word may be understood in a metaphorical sense, as signifying some triumphant expressions of joy, suitable to the great occasion; or the word^z, which we render a *shout*, may signify the powerful word of command given by our Saviour, whereby the dead are called out of their graves; and, agreeable hereunto, it is added, that Christ shall come with the voice of the arch-angel. This has given occasion, to some, to enquire, whether there be one among the angels who is called so, as being the prince and chief of all the rest, who will receive the word immediately from Christ, and transmit it to other angels, whereby the world will be summoned to appear before his tribunal; but it is very difficult for us to account for this matter. That there is a very beautiful order and harmony among the angels, is beyond dispute; nevertheless, we have no ground to assert, that one is superior to the rest, unless that be the meaning of the word *Arch-angel*, in this, and two or three other scriptures, in which we meet with it. But, though I will not contend with those who are otherwise minded, yet I am rather inclined to think that the word is always applied to our Saviour, and that he is called the

^a 2 Pet. i. 17.

^x Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

^r Matt. xxv. 34.

^y Chap. xxiv. 31. and xix. 28.

^t Ver. 31.

^u 1 Thess. iv. 16.

^v 1 Cor. xv. 52.

^z Κέλευσμα

532 Benefits procured by CHRIST, by whom applied, and to whom.

Arch-angel, as he is the Head and Sovereign of all the angels; who, as the Apostle says, *were created by him, and for him*^a; and who are commanded *to worship him*^b; and, as it is said elsewhere, *Angels, authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him*^c; therefore he certainly has a greater right to this glorious character than any creature.

If to this it be objected, that Christ's being said to come with the voice of the arch-angel, denotes, that the arch-angel is distinguished from him; to this it may be replied, that that does not necessarily follow from hence; for the meaning of the words may be this, that the Lord shall descend with a shout, or powerful word of command, given forth by him, who is the Prince and Lord of all the angels, and transmitted by them to the whole world, who shall be hereby summoned to appear before him.

2. He is said to come with the sound of a trumpet; which seems to allude to the use of trumpets, to gather the hosts of *Israel* together, when they were to march by their armies, or in the day of their solemn festivals, and in the year of *Jubilee*, which was proclaimed thereby; and accordingly this eternal *Jubilee*, and triumph of the saints, is said to begin with the sound of a trumpet; not that there shall be a material trumpet, like those in use among us, as some, who have low apprehensions of the glory of this day, have supposed, as though there were nothing figurative in the mode of speaking; whereas the principal thing intended thereby is, that there shall be some glorious ensigns of the divine Majesty, or effects of his power, which shall fill his saints with exceeding great joy, and his enemies with terror, and shall be a signal to all to appear before his tribunal. This is all we need to determine concerning it; though I will not altogether deny the literal sense of the words, provided they be understood in the same manner, as when God appeared from mount *Sinai*, with the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud^d; it is not improbable that there will be a sound like that of a trumpet formed in the air, by the immediate power of God, which shall be heard throughout the world, which will be an intimation to all, that the great Judge of quick and dead is at hand, and will be a Branch of that external glory, with which he shall appear.

We might here have proceeded to consider Christ, as seated on his throne, and the glorious work that he shall be engaged in, in judging the world in righteousness, which is the last thing mention'd in this *Answer*: But, since we are led particularly to insist on that subject, and to speak concerning the persons to be judged, as set at Christ's right or left hand, together with the manner of proceeding in that day; the sentence passed, and the final estate of angels and men determined thereby, together with the consequence thereof, both to the righteous and wicked, in some following *Answers*^e, we shall proceed to speak concerning the application of redemption, or the benefits procured by Christ's Mediation.

QUEST. LVII. *What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?*

ANSW. Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

QUEST. LVIII. *How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured?*

ANSW. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

QUEST. LIX. *Who are made partakers of redemption thro' Christ?*

ANSW. Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it, who are, in time, by the Holy Ghost, enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel.

I. IN the first of these *Answers*, we have an account of the blessings which Christ, as Mediator, has procured

^a Coloss. i. 16.
Quest. LXXXVIII.—XC.

^b Heb. i. 6.

^c 1 Pet. iii. 22.

^d Exod. xix. 16.

^e See vol. II.

for his people, namely, redemption; with all the other blessings of the covenant of grace; and accordingly we may observe, that the covenant of grace is the foundation of all the blessings that we enjoy, or hope for; and, among these, redemption is included, which, having been before consider'd, we need not, at present, enlarge on it.

As for those other benefits of the covenant of grace, which are the consequents of our redemption, they differ from it, in that redemption is said to be wrought out *for us* by Christ, in his own Person, whereas some other benefits we enjoy, are, more especially, consider'd, as wrought *in us*; and these are particularly mentioned in several following *Answers*; which treat of effectual calling, sanctification, repentance unto life, and other graces, which are inherent in us, whereby our hearts and actions are changed and conformed to the will of God. And there are other blessings which, more especially, respect our state God-ward; such as justification, in which our sins are pardoned, and our persons accepted; and adoption, wherein we are made and dealt with as God's children; and there are several other benefits which follow hereupon, whereby the work of grace is carried on, and we enabled to go on in the ways of God, with spiritual peace and joy, in believing, till we come to glory.

II. It is farther observed, that we are made partakers of these benefits, by the application thereof to us; first, they are purchased, and then applied. We are first redeem'd by price, and then deliver'd by the almighty power of God, and the application hereof is said to be more especially the work of the Holy Ghost; whereas the purchase of it only belongs to the Mediator.

In considering the application of redemption, we may observe, that it is a divine work, and therefore *not* to be ascribed to *our selves*, but it is *the gift of God*^f; and, as it is a work appropriate to God, so it is, in several scriptures, said to be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly we are said to *be born of the Spirit*^g, and *saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*^h; upon which account, the Spirit is sometimes called the Spirit of holiness, and of power, and he is said to dwell in us; which plainly shews that he is eminently glorified in the application of redemption.

But inasmuch as it is said, in one of

the *Answers* we are explaining, that this is the work *especially* of God the Holy Ghost, which is a mode of speaking often used by those who treat on this subject; this is to be consider'd with great caution; and therefore when we speak of it, as the work especially of God the Holy Ghost, we are not to understand it as though the Father and the Son were not equally concerned therein; for it is allowed by all, who have just *Ideas* of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, that those works, in which any of the divine perfections are display'd, belong equally, and alike, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghostⁱ; therefore when the application of redemption is said, more especially, to belong to the Holy Ghost, we are to understand nothing else by it, but that this work is peculiarly attributed to the Spirit, inasmuch as hereby he demonstrates his personal glory, in the subserviency of the work perform'd by him, to the glory of the Father, and of Christ the Mediator: But this we shall pass over, having insisted on it elsewhere^k.

III. We are now to consider redemption, as certainly and effectually applied to all, for whom it was purchased, together with the character of the persons who are interested therein. In this account of the application thereof, there is something supposed, namely, that it is not applied to all mankind. This every one will allow; for even they, who plead for universal redemption, do not assert the universal application of it, or that all mankind shall be eventually saved, as being contrary to the whole tenor of scripture; therefore we must conclude, that it is applied to none but those for whom Christ has purchased it. This is evident, because the design of the purchase thereof was, that they, who were redeemed, might reap the benefit of it. And, in this sense, 'tis farther observed, that it is *certainly* and *effectually* applied to them; from whence it follows, that the application thereof does not depend on the will of man, or on some uncertain conditions, which God expects we shall perform, that so the death of Christ might be render'd effectual; for whatever condition can be assigned, as conducive hereunto, it is the purchase of Christ's death; in which respect, the Spirit's applying one saving benefit, must be consider'd as a condition of his applying another; which is not on-

^f Eph. iii. 8.
ad extra sunt indivisa.

^g John iii. 5.

^h Titus iii. 5.

^k See Pag. 132, 133.

ⁱ Thus divines generally say, *Opera Trinitatis*

534 *The Disadvantages of those who never heard the Gospel.*

ly an improper sense of the word *Condition*, but it contains several things derogatory to the divine glory: But this need not be farther insisted on, since we have had occasion to speak of it elsewhere¹.

This leads us to consider the character of the persons to whom redemption is applied. These are described as such, who are enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel. This is a very extensive character belonging to those who are interested in Christ's redemption, as it includes in it all other graces, which accompany or flow from saving faith; and we are not, by nature, disposed to believe in Christ, but are rather averse to it; therefore it is farther said, that we are *enabled* to believe in him, as will be consider'd under a following *Answer*^m. And this is said to be done according to the gospel, as it not only discovers to us the object of faith; but contains many invaluable promises of this and other *graces*, that accompany salvation. And this grace of faith is farther said to be wrought in time, to denote, that though the purpose relating hereunto was from eternity, and the purchase thereof was made before we had a being, yet the application of it is in God's appointed time, when, after having run great lengths in impenitency and unbelief, he is pleased to call us by his grace, and thereby bring us into the way of salvation.

QUEST. LX. *Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved, by their living according to the light of nature?*

ANSW. They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the church.

THIS *Answer* is an inference deduced from the foregoing; for, if redemption be only applied to those

who are enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel, then it follows, that they who have not the gospel, cannot be made partakers of this privilege; and the general scope and design thereof is to assert the necessity of divine revelation, as well as faith in Christ, against those who suppose that the gate of salvation is much wider than our Saviour has determined it to be, who says, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*ⁿ. I am sensible that this doctrine cannot but be disrelished by them, who are not disposed to exclude any from a possibility of attaining salvation; and are ready to charge those with groundless censoriousness, and want of Christian temper, who pass so severe a sentence on so great a part of mankind, as are included in it. It is also contrary to the presumptuous hope of corrupt nature, which is unwarrantably prone to expect salvation, without faith in Christ. This some defend by arguments, but many more seem to do it by their practice.

They who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, design hereby to advance the goodness of God, and are ready to conclude; that it is inconsistent with that divine perfection to exclude any from a possibility of salvation, and therefore it is not agreeable to their method of reasoning, to confine the means of grace to so small a number, as that of those to whom the gospel is preached; accordingly many of them have asserted, that the Heathen, as well as Christians, are put into a salvable state by the death of Christ, so that they shall be saved if they live according to the dictates of the light of nature, though they know nothing of Christ and the gospel. But, in order to their maintaining this argument, they have some great difficulties to surmount, inasmuch as, while they attempt to aggrandize the mercy of God, they seem to overthrow the necessity of divine revelation, as well as run counter to the sense of many scriptures.

Therefore some, who have asserted universal redemption, have not extended the universality of it any farther, than to those who are favoured with the gospel; but either leave it, as a matter which we know nothing of, and ought not to enquire into, or else they seem to suggest, that the dark traditional knowledge of the gospel, which, they suppose, some of the Heathen have had, was sufficient

¹ See *Pag.* 376—378: and 437, 438.

^m See *Vol. II. Quest. LXXII.*

ⁿ *Matt. vii. 14.*

Some Things premised concerning the State of the Heathen. 535

to lead them to a small degree of faith in Christ; or, since that cannot well be defended, others have supposed, that God may lead many of the Heathen into the knowledge of Christ, before they go out of the world, by some secret methods, not to be discerned by us. These are not willing, with the *Deists*, to set aside the necessity of divine revelation; whereas others, who do not suppose it necessary to salvation, but only to our farther improvement in the way thereunto, and therefore conclude, that Christianity is only a brighter, or clearer, way to heaven; these are, more especially, opposed in this *Answer* we are explaining.

I am sensible that this subject, we are entering on, has been treated with more reflection and censure than many others; and we are hereby supposed to conclude, that the divine dispensations are too severe, and that that goodness and mercy, which is his nature and delight, is not sufficiently advanced and magnified; and that it is a sour and ill-natur'd way of reasoning, to suppose that any are put under a necessity of perishing, for want of a divine revelation, and that it does not become us to pass a damnatory sentence on any, more especially on so great a part of the world, as that is, who know nothing of Christ, and the way of salvation by him. It is necessary for us therefore to premise,

1. That we pretend not to pass a judgment concerning the final state of particular persons, by concluding, that they, who are now strangers to Christ, and his gospel, shall always remain so; for we know not when, to whom, or by what means, God may reveal Christ, to those who now sit in darkness, and are unacquainted with the way of salvation by him. And as for the possibility of God's revealing Christ, in a secret way, to those who do not sit under the sound of the gospel, we will not deny it; however, we cannot infer the certainty of events, from the possibility thereof, and therefore we must have a clearer proof hereof, before we can believe it.

2. God might justly have excluded the whole race of mankind from a possibility of attaining salvation, as well as the fallen angels; for there was nothing out of himself that moved him to have compassion on those who are the heirs of salvation, any more than others.

3. We are far from supposing that the Heathens shall be condemned for not be-

lieving in Christ, whom they never heard of, or not complying with the gospel-overture, which was never made to them. Invincible ignorance, though it be an unhappiness, and a consequence of our fallen state, is not a crime; therefore,

4. The Heathen shall be judged by the law of nature; and, if the Apostle's words, *As many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law*^o, be applicable to them, which, I think, no one will deny; yet their condemnation cannot be equal to that of those, who neglect and despise the great salvation offer'd to them in the gospel.

5. The Heathen, who have had no other light but that of nature, cannot be exculpated from the charge of many actual sins committed by them; in which respect, they have rebel'd against the light they have been favoured with. All of them, indeed, have not contracted the same degree of guilt with those whom the Apostle describes, who committed sins contrary to nature, *being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, covetousness, maliciousness, wickedness*^p, and many other sins of the blackest nature, and therefore all of them are not liable to the same condemnation. And, indeed, some of the Heathen-moralists have been a blessing, in many respects, to the age in which they lived, who, by their writings and example, have endeavoured to reform it from vice and immorality; and it is certain, that they shall not be punished for crimes which they have not committed: But whether the best of them shall be saved by the merits of Christ, though destitute of faith in him, is the question under our present consideration. To conclude that their good works have merited salvation, is not only contrary to the analogy of faith, but it is more than what can be said concerning the best works that were ever performed by Christians; and to argue, as many do, from the goodness of God, that they shall be saved, is certainly an inconclusive way of reasoning, unless we had some intimation of his purpose relating thereunto. If God has determined so to do, we must have recourse to his revealed will, and prove, from scripture, that there are promises of eternal life made to those who have no interest in Christ, and some ground, at least, to conclude, that some shall be happy in beholding his glory in another world, who have had no com-

munion,

^o Rom. ii. 12.

^p Chap. i. 25, 26, & seq.

536 No Salvation without hearing of, and believing in CHRIST.

munion, by faith, with him in this. These things must first be proved, before we can see reason to deny what is contained in this *Answer*, which we proceed to consider. Accordingly 'tis observed,

I. That they who never heard the gospel, and neither know nor believe in Christ, cannot be saved. This supposes, that faith and salvation are inseparably connected; and, though it be particularly applied to those who are destitute of the gospel; yet 'tis levelled against all, who presumptuously expect salvation, without ground, who remain in a state of unbelief and impenitency, whether they have the means of grace or no. And here let us consider that many who are called Christians, though they know little more than the bare name of Christ, yet they doubt not but that they shall be saved by his merits, and so live and die in this fatal mistake, how vile soever their conversation has been, as the prophet *Isaiah* says, *Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope*^a; or like the person whom *Moses* speaks of, who, *when he heareth the words of this curse, yet blesteth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst*^r. It is too notorious to be denied, that a great part of men, though grossly ignorant, and openly profane, who live without God in the world, notwithstanding, expect to be saved; and it is one of Satan's great engines, by which he endeavours to banish all religion out of the world, by persuading his deluded subjects that all things shall go well with them, though they make no pretensions to it. This presumption is rather founded in stupidity, than supported by arguments, and is a great instance of the alienation of the mind and affections from God, and shews how deceitful, and desperately wicked, the heart of man is, when destitute of divine grace.

But what shall we say of those who pretend to defend this, and thereby put a sword into the hands of those who adhere to them, to destroy themselves? This the *Deists* do. And, inasmuch as their method of reasoning is subversive of the Christian religion, and of faith in Christ, as connected with salvation, I cannot omit to mention it in this place. These pretend not to be *Atheists*, though they express not a due veneration for the

divine Majesty, that they may not be excluded from the society of mankind, who have some degree of abhorrence of *Atheism* impress'd on their nature. They talk, indeed, of God, and of natural religion, but make reveal'd the subject of their scorn and ridicule. If they read the scriptures, it is apparently with a design to burlesque them, and charge them with inconsistency and self-contradiction. When they speak of revelation, or the gift of prophecy, they give it no better a term than *Enthusiasm*; and, when they mention the failings, recorded in scripture, of those who were otherwise holy and excellent men, they take occasion maliciously to reproach them, and insinuate, that they were vile persons, guilty of the most enormous crimes, and yet were saved, and wickedly infer from thence, that there is nothing solid and substantial in religion, but that persons may be as safe and happy without it, as with it. If they refer to the brightest and most excellent part of the character of the saints recorded in scripture, this they suppose to be the effect of implicit faith, and to take its rise from priestcraft. And our Saviour himself is not only divested by them of his glory, but reckoned, as, they suppose, *Moses* was of old, a designing person, who brought a new set of notions into the world to amuse and confound it. As for his miracles, which none but the blinded *Jews*, and they who are equally prejudiced against Christianity, never pretended to contest, much less to vilify, these they treat with the utmost scorn and contempt, as a late writer has done, whose blasphemy has been made manifest, by those who have wrote in defence of this part of our religion.

But inasmuch as persons, who are not disposed to indulge so great a degree of profaneness, have been sensible that this is not a right method to extirpate Christianity, since it cannot but be treated with the utmost abhorrence, by those who read the scripture with any religious design. There are others who, though they speak of God, yet glorify him not as God. These will, indeed, allow him to have some divine perfections; but they cast a reproach on his providence, and suppose, that he is too great to be affected with, or concerned about the actions and behaviour of so mean a creature as man. And as what we call sin, can be no disparagement to his glory, so

^a *Isai. lvii. 10.*

^r *Deut. xxix. 19.*

Deists and others hope to be saved without Faith in CHRIST. 537

he is too good and pitiful to his creatures, to punish them, at least, with eternal torments for it; so that if they allow the soul to be immortal, and capable of happiness in another world, which all of them, without exception, do not; yet they suppose that God made no creature to be for ever miserable. And as for those laws which he has given to mankind, which are enstamped on their nature, and contain nothing but what might have been known without revelation, these they pretend to be designed only to keep the world in order, to promote the interest of civil society, to prevent men from murdering one another, disturbing the tranquility of the government in which they live, or invading the property of others; which is not doing as they would have others do to them. And as for the punishment of sin; that is no farther to be regarded, than as vice and immorality render persons obnoxious to bodily diseases, some marks of infamy, which custom has annex'd thereunto, or the lash of human laws. This is all the scheme of religion that some, among the *Deists*, endeavour to propagate; and every thing that is built more immediately upon divine revelation, they not only reckon unnecessary, but enthusiastick, and no other than a contrivance of some, who, with a view to their own interest, endeavour to puzzle the world with mysterious doctrines, which neither they, nor their votaries understand.

It must be supposed, that these men do not think that the knowledge of Christ, or faith in him, is necessary to salvation; yet they doubt not but that it shall go well with them in another world, if there be a future state, which, through the influence of that scepticism, which is, for the most part, a concomitant of *Deism*, they sometimes question. We shall not make so great a digression from our present subject, as to give a particular reply to these assertions, which, though propagated with much assurance, are not pretended to be defended by solid arguments; and, indeed, the whole gospel is a reply to it. Whatever doctrine thereof is maintained by Christians, it will have a tendency to give them an abhorrence of it, and confirm their faith against such attempts, as are used to stagger and pervert it.

Thus concerning the methods that are used, by some, to overthrow reveal'd religion, and the necessity of faith in Christ to salvation. We shall now proceed to

consider on what grounds persons hope to be saved, without the knowledge of Christ, or faith in him. And,

1. Some have no other ground of hope but the goodness of the divine nature; and accordingly they think, that because God delights not in the misery of any of his creatures, but takes all occasions to make himself known, as a God of infinite kindness and compassion, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, and will not resent those injuries which we may offer to him, but will lay them under eternal obligations to him, who have, by their sins, render'd themselves unworthy to be saved by him; therefore they hope that all things shall go well with them, though they are utter strangers to the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and are altogether destitute of faith in him.

But this we cannot call any other than a presumptuous confidence; it is nothing else but to abuse the riches of God's goodness, and to claim an interest in it, without ground. 'Tis, indeed, a very great truth that God delights in mercy; and that this Attribute cannot be too much admired or advanced by us; but yet it must not be set in opposition to any of his other perfections. He is certainly a just and holy, as well as a merciful God, and therefore we are not to suppose that one of these perfections shall be glorified, to the dishonour of another. Might not fallen angels as well make use of the same argument, and say, that because God is merciful, therefore he will deliver them from those chains of darkness and misery, in which they are held, as that the mercy of God should be presumed to be a foundation of hope, to those who have no ground to conclude their interest in it, as expecting it in another way, than that in which he has declared his will to glorify it? And it is certain, that whomsoever God designs to glorify his mercy in saving, he first determines to advance the glory thereof, in making them meet for salvation, by sanctifying or purifying their hearts by faith. To separate these two, is therefore a dishonour to the divine perfections: God never designed to save his people in sin, but first to save them from it, and then to crown the work, which he had begun, with complete blessedness. Therefore the man who lives in all excess of riot, and yet hopes for salvation, must be guilty of a groundless presumption. When we read, in scripture, of God's extending mercy, we find that there are certain marks and

538 Some false Grounds of Persons Hope of Salvation.

characters annex'd, of those persons who have ground to lay claim to an interest in it: Thus 'tis said, *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plentiful in mercy*^a; but then 'tis added, that this mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them^b; and elsewhere the Psalmist admires the goodness of God, (which is, doubtless, beyond expression, wonderful) when he says, *O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up, and wrought, in which he speaks of the present displays of goodness, and the future reserves thereof*; but it follows, that this belongs only to them that fear him, and to them that trust in him before the sons of men^c! and elsewhere 'tis said, *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies*^d, that is, to them, exclusively of all others.

Moreover, we never read of God's glorifying his mercy but in Christ; first, in bringing sinners nigh to him, by his blood, and then in applying redemption purchased, by his Spirit: Thus the Apostle says, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself*^e; and then he adds, as an expedient to give sinners a ground of hope, that they have an interest in this privilege, that, in the gospel, he sends an embassy to them, to beseech them, as they value their own souls, to be reconciled to God, by complying with the gospel-overture, and repenting of, and desisting from their rebellion against him. And, when he is represented as the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, he is, at the same time, stiled the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ^f, to denote, that this mercy is display'd in and through a Mediator; and therefore our hope of attaining it, must be founded in our interest in him, which cannot be consider'd otherwise, than as including in it the grace of faith. Are they, who have a right to expect salvation, called heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ^g? They are farther described, as conform'd to his image^h. Have they a right to the inheritance of the saints in lightⁱ? they are characterized as made meet for it^j; and, when the Apostle exhorts persons to look for the mercy of God unto eternal life, he intimates, that this would be a presumptuous expectation, were it separate

from their keeping themselves in the love of God^k.

2. Others have no foundation for their expectation of salvation, but by extenuating sin; and are hardly perswaded to confess themselves to be sinners, how vile soever their conversation be: Thus 'tis said, concerning Ephraim, *The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress*; yet he refused to acknowledge this, and says, *In all my labours, they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin*^l; and, when the prophet Jeremiah exhibits a charge against a degenerate age, and tells them, *Thou hast taught the wicked ones thy ways, also in thy skirts is found the blood of the poor innocents*; what abominable stupidity were they guilty of, when they reply to this, *Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me*^m.

Sometimes they build their hope of salvation, though they cannot exculpate themselves from the charge of sin, on the bare supposition, that some others are greater sinners than themselves: Thus the Pharisee pleases himself, that he was not guilty of some notorious sins; that he was no extortioner, or adulterer, nor even as the Publican, whom he looks upon with great contemptⁿ; or if they are forced to conclude themselves to be among the number of the vilest and most notorious sinners, yet they presume that God will not punish them eternally for this, but will make some allowance for the propensity of human nature to sin, or the force of those temptations, which they have not been able to withstand; or, if they are liable to any extraordinary afflictions in this life, they suppose that these are sufficient to compensate for all the sins that they have committed, and therefore their miseries shall not be extended beyond it; so that, that which lies at the root of this presumptuous hope, is a secret denial of the infinite demerit of sin, or that it deserves eternal punishment. Now, that we may shew the vanity of that expectation, which has no other foundation than this, let us consider,

(1.) That to extenuate sin, is an argument that persons are unacquainted with themselves, know not the plague of their own hearts; and therefore it is the most destructive fallacy that men can put on themselves; and it is a sad token that they are given up to judicial blindness: But, when God shall charge sin on the

conscience,

^a Psal. ciii. 8.

^b Ver. 17, 18.

^c Psal. xxxii. 19.

^d Psal. xxi. 10.

^e 1 Cor. vi. 11.

^f Chap. i. 3.

^g Rom. viii. 17.

^h Ver. 29.

ⁱ Coloss. i. 12.

^j Jude, xxi. 24.

^k Heb. xii. 28.

^l Jer. ii. 35-35.

^m Luke xviii. 11.

conscience, or, as the Psalmist speaks, *reprove them, and set their iniquities in order before their eyes*^b, which he will do, at one time or other, they will appear to have been self-deceived, and the ground of their hope of salvation sink under them.

(2.) To suppose that sin does not deserve eternal punishment, is an affront to the holiness of God, and a disbelief of those threatnings which are denounced against it. 'Tis, in effect, to deny that sin is objectively infinite, which cannot be done, without denying, in effect, that God is a God of infinite perfection; 'tis a flying in the face of his justice, and charging him with male-administration; to such it may be said, as *Elibu* says to *Job*, *Wilt thou condemn him that is most just*^c? or, as God speaks, to reprove and humble him, *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayst be righteous*^d? But, since the eternity of the punishment of sin is particularly insisted on, under a following *Answer*^e, we shall add no more on that head at present; only let it be consider'd, that this method of reasoning has a tendency to banish all religion out of the world; and it is never made use of, but by those who make no pretensions to it.

3. If it be reckoned preposterous for any one to found his hope of salvation on the extenuating of his sins, others have a more plausible pretence, when they expect to be saved, because they perform some works that are materially good, though these are not only destitute of the grace of faith, but strangers to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. If they perform some moral duties, or abstain from some gross enormities, much more if they have a form of godliness, and are reckoned to be religious persons by the world, and, in many instances, are useful to those with whom they converse, they are ready to conclude, that they do, as it were, merit eternal life thereby, and God, for this, becomes a debtor to them; the former sort above-mentioned have too light thoughts of sin; these set too great a value on their duties, which is contrary to what our Saviour says, *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants*^f. I would not have it thought that hereby I design to depreciate any moral duties, or virtues, which have in them a degree of excellency, in pro-

portion to their nature: But the only thing that I intend hereby is; that good works, which do not proceed from a right principle, and are not performed for right ends, if there be not an internal principle of grace implanted in regeneration, nor faith in Christ, as the main spring thereof, or, if they be put in the room of Christ's righteousness, and so made the foundation of our justification, or right to eternal life, they are not accepted by God, and that hope of salvation, which is founded thereon, is vain, and unwarrantable.

4. There are others, who, as it is express'd in this *Answer*, frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess, and doubt not but, in so doing, they shall be saved. This presumption is defended by many, who call themselves Christians, who suppose, that a person may be saved in any religion, whether true or false: These don't stick to say, that, if they lived at *Rome*, they would embrace the Popish doctrines; or, if in *Turkey*, they would profess the *Mahometan* faith; or, had they been born in *India*, among the *Pagans*, they should have ground to conclude that they are in a safe way to heaven. This opinion certainly reflects dishonour on the Christian name; and it favours so much of scepticism, that these must be supposed to conclude, that there is nothing certain in religion; or, as to the different modes thereof, that these are only a political engine, a mere human invention, which stands upon no other basis but tradition, and has nothing else to propagate it, but implicit faith. This is the notion which they, who set themselves against divine revelation, entertain, concerning religion in general; or, if there be any thing in it that escapes their reproach and censure, it is only such maxims as are founded in the laws of nature, *viz.* that we ought to do to others, as we would have them do to us, govern our passions, that they may not be outrageous, and disturb not only our own peace, but that of all civil societies; and that we must not offer injuries, or violence, to those whom we converse with; but rather be gentle, good-humour'd, kind, and compassionate to them, and abstain from those enormities, which are abhorrent to nature. This they suppose to be sufficient to denominate any one a good man, who need

^b Plal. l. 21.
^c Luke xvii. 10.

^d Job xxxv. 17.

^e Chap. xi. 8.

^f See vol. II. *Quest.* LXXXIX.

540 *There is Salvation in no other but CHRIST. How this appears.*

not entertain any doubt of his own salvation: But this is to set aside all revelation, and disbelieve the demonstrative evidence which we have of the truth of the Christian religion, and it is to cast contempt on that, as unnecessary, which has in it the greatest excellency. It also contains a denial of that which is experienced by all true believers, namely, that reveal'd religion has the greatest tendency to dispose them to glorify God, and to do good to men; These sensibly find, that they have the greatest comfort, and most solid ground of hope, in a firm adherence thereunto; and laying all the strefs of their salvation on what is revealed in the gospel; and desiring to adhere stedfastly, by faith, to Christ, as the only way of salvation.

II. It is farther observed, in this *Answer*, that there is salvation in no other but in Christ. The scripture is very full and expresse to this purpose: Thus 'tis said, *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*^a; and elsewhere the Apostle says, *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*^b. On him the church is built; he is the only Mediator between God and man, the only Redeemer, who purchased salvation for those who shall be made partakers of it: He laid the foundation-stone of this glorious fabrick, and therefore we must conclude; that the carrying on of this work belongsto him, till the top-stone is laid, and the work brought to perfection; upon which account he is stiled, *The Author and Finisher of faith*^c. Accordingly we may observe,

I. That faith, and all other graces that accompany salvation, have a peculiar reference to Christ: Thus we are said to *obtain precious faith through his righteousness*^d; and he is said to *dwell in the hearts of his people by faith*^e, and to *increase their faith*^f; and he is also the Object of faith, as he says, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*^g; and this grace is frequently described as *a coming to him*^h; and 'tis such a coming as implies more than an attendance on his ordinances; for it is connected with salvation, which is the meaning of that metaphorical expression, in which 'tis said, that such *shall never hunger nor thirst*; by which we are to understand that all their desires

shall be fulfilled, and they shall be satisfied with that perfect blessedness, which he will make them partakers of. Besides, it is such a coming to Christ, as is the effect of God's almighty power; therefore he says, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him*ⁱ.

This will farther appear, if we consider that salvation is founded on Christ's executing his three offices of Priest, Prophet, and King. The first of these he executes in our behalf; not in us, but for us, whereby faith, and all other graces, are purchased; whereas, in the execution of his other two offices, namely, his prophetic and kingly, especially when it is rendered effectual to salvation, his people are the subjects in whom they are executed; the work performed is internal, and the consequence of it, is the soul's giving that glory to him, that is the result thereof; and this cannot be done, without our knowing him to be a Mediator, and, as such, ordained and qualified to execute them. This cannot be known without divine revelation.

Moreover; this is evident, from the Apostle's method of reasoning, in which he considers our *calling on the name of the Lord*, as inseparably connected with salvation, and necessary thereunto, and that this proceeds from faith; for, says he, *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed*^j? And this faith supposes the preaching of the gospel, which gospel is represented, in many scriptures, as a display of the glory of Christ; therefore it follows, that there is no salvation without divine revelation; or that they, who never heard of Christ, and consequently never believed in him, have no right or claim to it.

We might also observe the account which the same Apostle gives of that worship, which is necessary to salvation, when he says, *Through him we have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father*^k. To have access to God, is certainly necessary to salvation; and this is by a Mediator, which is elsewhere called, *Coming to God by him*: But this cannot be done without the knowledge of him, as the way to the Father, and that faith in him, which is founded thereon. Moreover, salvation is to be consider'd as a promised blessing, founded in the covenant of grace, and therefore they, who are strangers to

^a Acts iv. 12.

^f Luke xvii. 5.

^h 18.

^b 1 Cor. iii. 11.

^g John xiv. 1.

^c Chap. vi. 35.

ⁱ Heb. xii. 3.

^j Ver. 44.

^k 2 Pet. i. 1.

^l Rom. x. 14.

^m Eph. iii. 17.

ⁿ Eph.

That there is Salvation in none but CHRIST farther prov'd. 541

this covenant, have no right to lay claim to the promises thereof, which are no where contained but in divine revelation, and accordingly they are said to be *yea and amen in Christ, to the glory of God*^a. Therefore, what hope can there be of obtaining these promised blessings, without the knowledge of Christ?

2. It farther appears, that there is no salvation without faith in Christ, as founded in divine revelation, inasmuch as there is no justification without it. Justification is inseparably connected with salvation by the Apostle, when he says, *Whom he justified, them he also glorified*^b. To separate these two, is to suppose, that a person may expect salvation, without being deliver'd from the guilt of sin, and the condemning sentence of the law; or to have a right to eternal life, without being able to plead any righteousness that is worthy of God's acceptance, which is certainly to build our hope on a sandy foundation, and is contrary to those scriptures that set forth the impossibility of our being justified by the works of the law, or the necessity of faith in Christ's righteousness, in order to our claiming this privilege. This the Apostle Paul frequently inculcates; therefore it follows, that no one can plead any thing done by him, as the matter of his justification, tho' he could say, as that Apostle did, *touching the righteousness that is in the law, I am blameless*^c; and elsewhere he says, *Though I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified*^d. If the best saint in the world must have something to support his expectation of being discharged from condemnation, that is infinitely more valuable than any act of his own obedience; then certainly that obedience, which is performed, according to the dictates of the light of nature, without divine revelation, is far from being a sufficient foundation to support a person's hope of justification and salvation: But such who are destitute of the gospel, have nothing else to plead; therefore we must conclude, as it is express'd in this *Answer*, that they, who never heard the gospel, and believe not in Christ, cannot be saved.

3. This may be also infer'd, from those scriptures that set forth the pernicious consequence of unbelief; as 'tis said, *He that believes not, is condemned already, and shall not see life, but the wrath of*

God abideth on him^e; and elsewhere, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*^f. And, inasmuch as faith is founded on divine revelation, there are other scriptures that represent those who are destitute of it, as being in an hopeless state: Thus the Apostle tells the church at *Ephesus*, that *when they were Gentiles, and consequently strangers to the gospel, they had no hope, being without God in the world*^g; so that, whatever knowledge they had of a God by the light of nature, or whatever blessings they received from common providence, they had not such a knowledge of him, nor such an interest in him, as gave them hope of salvation. The Apostle does not speak of them as being in an hopeless state, because their conversation had been more vile than that of other *Gentiles*, as acting contrary to the dictates of the law of nature; but he speaks of them as *Gentiles*, that is, without the light of divine revelation; and therefore what he says, concerning them, is applicable to all the Heathen, as such^h.

Again, it is farther observed, in scripture, that, before Christ was preached to the *Gentiles*, they were not the objects of his special care and goodness, but, in this respect, neglected by him; accordingly 'tis said, that, *in times past, he suffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways*ⁱ; and elsewhere these are called, *Times of ignorance, which, it is said, God winked at*^k, as it is in our translation: But this is not so agreeable to the sense of the *Greek* word^l, as if we render'd it, during the times of this ignorance, God having over-look'd them, that is, the *Gentiles, hath now commanded all men every where to repent*; and, if they were disregarded by him, they could not be supposed to be the objects of his special grace, or to have a right and title to salvation.

Moreover, the Apostle Paul, when speaking of some among the Heathen, who excel'd others in wisdom; notwithstanding being destitute of gospel-light, he casts the utmost contempt on those attainments in the knowledge of divine things, which they gloried in, as being insufficient to salvation; and therefore he says, that whatever they knew of the perfections of the divine nature, so far as they may be known without divine revelation, yet *by wisdom they knew not God*;

^a 2 Cor. i. 20.

^f Chap. viii. 24.

^g Acts xiv. 16.

^b Rom. viii. 30.

^e Eph. ii. 12.

^k Chap. xvii. 30.

^c Phil. iii. 6.

^h It is a rule in *Logick*, *A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia.*

ⁱ *Unreel'd*.

^d 1 Cor. iv. 4.

^e John iii. 18, 36.

and therefore he says, *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*^m

Object. 1. It is objected, that it is contrary to the goodness of God to condemn persons for invincible ignorance, as that of the Heathen must be supposed to be, since it was impossible for them to know the way of salvation by a Redeemer.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that we must distinguish between God's condemning persons for not knowing the gospel, which is to condemn them for invincible ignorance, and his not giving the gospel to a great part of the world, (as a necessary means of grace and salvation) whom he designed, as we before observed, to overlook, and suffer to walk in their own ways. If the goodness of God had laid a natural obligation on him, without an act of his sovereign will, to bestow the means of grace, or the knowledge of the way of salvation on them, then it would have been contrary to his divine perfections to have denied the gospel to any, and so to condemn them who are ignorant thereof. It is one thing for God to leave them in their fallen state, the result whereof would be their not knowing the way of salvation, and another thing for him to condemn them for this, as though there were no other reason obliging him to inflict this righteous judgment on them.

Object. 2. It is farther objected, that the Apostle says, in *Rom. i. 19. That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewn it unto them;* and, in *Chap. ii. 14, 15. When the Gentiles, which have not the law, that is, any other law than that of nature, do, by nature, the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing them witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.* From hence it is argued, that the Gentiles have sufficient knowledge of the divine law, to bring them into a state of salvation; their consciences are said to *excuse them*, that is, not to charge guilt upon them; therefore they are justified by walking according to the dictates of the light of nature.

Ans. 1. As to what the Apostle says, in the former of these scriptures, that *that which may be known of God, is mani-*

fest in them, or shew'd to them; he does not speak of those things which are to be known of God, that have an immediate reference to salvation; nor does he say, that every thing necessary to be known of him, in order thereunto, is manifest in them; but, *that of God, which is known by them*ⁿ, is from him as the God of nature, *he has shewn it to them*, that is, he has given them sufficient light to discover his *eternal power and Godhead*, in a way of reasoning *from the things that are made*, as he adds, in the following words; but the eternal power and Godhead may be known by those who are destitute of that knowledge, which is necessary to salvation.

2. As to the other scripture, mention'd in the objection, in which *the Gentiles are said to do by nature the things contain'd in the law*; he does not infer from thence that they are the servants of God, or willing subjects to his government, or, indeed, that they fulfill the law of nature; and therefore we cannot suppose that he concludes them justified thereby, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the Apostle's doctrine, in other parts of his writings. 'Tis true, he says, that *their consciences sometimes excuse*, as well as, at other times, *accuse them*; yet it must be consider'd, that conscience may excuse, or plead not guilty, with respect to the charge of some crimes, which are committed by others, when, at the same time, this does not exempt them from the guilt of sin in general, or give them a right and title to eternal life. The Apostle therefore designs only to shew how far the corruption of men may be restrained, by their attending to the dictates of the light of nature, whereby a great deal of sin and guilt might be prevented: But he does not determine that God has any farther design of grace towards them; for, if he had, he would have given them the means of salvation; and if he has not said that he will save them, without giving them these means, we have no ground to assert that he will; for that is to conclude, without sufficient evidence from scripture.

Object. 3. It is said, in *Rom. ii. 4. that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance*; but repentance is certainly connected with salvation; therefore the goodness, or bounty of God, which persons, who have no other light but that of nature, have some knowledge of, may lead them to salvation.

^m 1 Cor. i. 20.

ⁿ τὸ γνωστὸν αὐτοῦ.

Ans.

Ans. It is evident that the Apostle, in this scripture, does not speak to the Gentiles, but to the Jews; for, having consider'd the vile abominations which were practis'd by the Gentiles, in the foregoing Chapter, in this he reproves the Jews, when he says, in *Ver. 1.* *Thou art inexcusable, O man that judgest, and yet dost the same things;* and, in *Ver. 17.* *Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God;* therefore, if the Apostle is speaking to them, when he says, *The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance,* we are not only to understand hereby the bounty of common providence, or those effects of the divine goodness, which are known and experienced by the whole world; but the goodness of God, which they had experienced, who were the peculiar objects thereof, and favour'd by him, above all the rest of the world, *to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, and the giving the law, and the service of God, and the promises,* as we read, in *Chap. ix. 4.* therefore certainly they were highly to blame, that they were not hereby led to repentance.

Object. 4. It is farther objected, that the Apostle, in disputing with the Athenians, in *Acts xvii. 27.* puts them upon seeking after God, *if haply they might feel after him, and find him;* whereas, if it were impossible to find God, that is, the way of acceptance in his sight, by the light of nature, it would have been a preposterous thing for the Apostle to have put them upon seeking him; therefore it follows, that they are not destitute of all means of grace, or without a possibility of salvation.

Ans. To this it may be replied, that, if by *seeking the Lord*, the Apostle means enquiring into the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and pressing after faith in him; as it is said, *Seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;* and, *If thou seek him, he will be found of thee;* this does not argue, that the Heathen, before the gospel was preached to them, in seeking, might find the way of salvation: For,

1. Though he be speaking to the Heathen, yet they are consider'd, at this time, as having the gospel preached to them by him, and therefore not destitute of the external means of grace, which he advises them to attend to, in hope that their endeavours might be succeeded.

2. If, on the other hand, he speaks to them without regard to the privilege they then enjoy'd, and so informs them what they might attain to, without divine revelation, which is the only sense that seems, in the least, to favour the objection; then, by *seeking the Lord*, we must understand their enquiring into the divine perfections, so far as the knowledge thereof is attainable by the light of nature; and the consequence of it would be their attaining such a degree thereof, as would discover the absurdity of that idolatry that they were guilty of, which the Apostle is arguing against. And we may observe, that he makes use of such a mode of speaking, as is very agreeable to this sense of the text, when he says, *If haply ye might feel after him;* which is a metaphor, taken from those who are endeavouring to find their way in the dark, in which they feel after things which they cannot see, and sometimes they find them. And, when he concludes, that *haply, or, peradventure, you may find him,* this implies, that though the Heathen, by the light of nature, had some means of attaining such a measure of knowledge, as would have given them a full conviction that there was but one God, and that this God ought to be worshipped in a way agreeable to his divine perfections, and consequently that they ought not to think that the *Godhead was like to gold or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device,* which would have effectually confuted that gross idolatry, which they were charged with; yet some did not attend to the light of nature, so far as this amounts to, which was the case of those whom he was disputing with; and therefore his design is to reprove their idolatry, and persuade them to seek after that knowledge of God, which would have induced them to forsake it; so that, in that part of his argument, he don't seem to proceed any farther than this; and therefore, when, in another part of it, he treats of that knowledge of God, which is more immediately connected with salvation, he speaks of *Jesus and the resurrection*, though they treated it with ridicule and contempt; therefore it does not follow, that the Heathen, by the light of nature, had a sufficient discovery of the way of salvation.

Object. 5. There is another objection against the doctrine we are maintaining, taken from some instances of those who are supposed to have been destitute of

divine

° Matt. vii. 7.

° 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

divine revelation, as living without the pale of the church, and yet recommended in scripture, as men excelling many others in grace, concerning whom there is no reason to doubt, but that they were in a state of salvation; such as *Melchisedeck*, *Job*, and his friends, with whom the dispute was held, mentioned in the book of *Job*; and, in the New Testament, the *Centurion* concerning whom our Saviour says, *Verily, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*^a; and *Cornelius*, whom we read of in the *Acts of the Apostles*; these were all supposed to be in a state of salvation, and yet reckoned among the Heathen.

Ans. 1. As to *Melchisedeck*, we have, under a foregoing *Answer*^r, given our sentiments who he was, which, if what was there observed be true, will render this objection of no force: But, inasmuch as it is founded on the commonly-receiv'd opinion, namely, that he was a priest and a king in the land of *Canaan*, we may add, that this will make very little to their purpose; for, 'tis certain, he was not an idolater, or a stranger to reveal'd religion; and therefore it cannot be argued, from hence, that they, who are so, may be in a state of salvation.

2. As for *Job*, and his friends, mentioned in that book which goes under his name, it is certain, that they were well acquainted with the revealed will of God, as appears from the subject-matter of that book; and to say, that they were out of the pale of the church, as they did not descend from that branch of *Abraham's* family, from which the *Israelites* came, this will not do much service to their argument, unless it could be prov'd that they were strangers to the faith, and way of salvation, that was professed by the church. We have, under a foregoing *Answer*^r, consider'd them, as living before the scriptures were committed to writing, and also before the distinction between the *Jew* and *Gentile* was much known in the world, or, at least, before the true worshippers of God had universally apostatized to idolatry; and therefore, though many other nations were idolaters, and, probably, some were so in the country where they lived, yet it does not appear that they were so; therefore this cannot be brought, as an argument, to prove, that such who are destitute of the knowledge of the true God, as founded on divine revelation, may be in the way of salvation.

3. As for the *Centurion*, though he was a *Roman* officer, it does not follow, from hence, that when he came to our Saviour, and express'd his great faith and humility, that he was an Heathen; for he had seen or heard of Christ's miracles, and his doctrine, and, probably, might be convinced thereby, and disposed to believe in him from that conviction; and, 'tis certain, his words do not argue him to be an Heathen; therefore this part of the objection is foreign to the design for which it is brought.

4. As for *Cornelius*, 'tis true, there are many things extraordinary in his character, viz. that he was a devout man, and one that feared God; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always^r; and 'tis farther said, concerning him, that his prayers and his alms came up for a memorial before God; all which expressions seem to favour the objection. Notwithstanding, it may be replied to it,

(1.) If this account, concerning him, give ground to conclude that he was in a state of salvation before *Peter* was sent to preach the gospel to him, which the learned *Beza*^u, and others, suppose: Nevertheless, it must be proved, that he was altogether a stranger to divine revelation, and the account we have of the way of salvation therein, or else the argument, taken from thence, in opposition to what we are maintaining, is of no force. 'Tis true, it is said, that he fell down at *Peter's* feet, and worshipped him^x; which seems to argue him to be no better than an Heathen idolater at that time: But they who conclude him to have been, at the same time, in a state of salvation, reckon this nothing else but an instance of extraordinary civil respect, which, because it had the appearance of religious worship, *Peter*, as it is intimated in the following words, refused to receive it, lest some present should conclude that he gave him that honour, which belongs to God alone.

All that I shall say, in answer to the objection, as supposing him to be in a state of salvation, is, that tho' he was a *Roman*, and bred up in their religion, yet it appears, from his general character, that he was very much concerned about the salvation of his soul, and therefore, doubtless, had not been wanting in his enquiries about the way to attain it. As for the gospel, that had not been publicly preached, at that time, to the *Gentiles*,

^a Matt. viii. 10.
Bez. in loc.

^r See Pag. 420—422:
^x Ver. 25.

^u See Pag. 225, 226.

^r Acts x. 2.

^u Vid.

and he had not had any opportunity to converse with the Apostles, or to sit under their ministry before this; but his conversation had been principally among the *Jews*, from whom he might be inform'd, that tho' they did not believe our Saviour, who was crucified, to be the Messiah: yet the Messiah was expected; and, when he came, he would do that for his people which was foretold by the prophets. Here his faith rested, and he wanted only a convincing evidence that our Saviour was he; and this *Peter* was sent to communicate to him.

(2.) If we should suppose him not to have been converted before *Peter* was sent to him, which seems more probable, because, in *Peter's* relation of this matter to the Apostles, he adds a particular circumstance that implies as much, in *Chap. xi. 14.* namely, that he *should tell him words, whereby he, and all his house, should be saved*; it plainly argues, that, before this, they were not in a state of salvation; and, if so, then the objection, which supposes that he was, is sufficiently answer'd: But, if we acquiesce in this answer to it, there is one difficulty that remains to be accounted for, *viz.* how this is consistent with his character, as a devout man, fearing God, and his prayers and his alms being accepted by him?

The only reply I shall give to this is, that some duties may be performed that are materially good, by those who are not in a state of salvation; and that these works may, as far as they have any circumstance of goodness in them, come up for a memorial before God: Thus God owned the humiliation, repentance, and reformation of the *Ninevites*; and it is said, that when one came to our Saviour, and told him how he had observed the commandments of God, and, at the same time, express'd an earnest desire to inherit eternal life; it is remarked, on this occasion, that though he would not part with all for Christ, and therefore was not to be reckoned a believer; yet *Jesus, beholding him, loved him*^v, that is, he approved of what was good in him, tho' it wanted some circumstances that were necessary to denominate an action good in all respects. Therefore, why may we not suppose that God approved of what was excellent in *Cornelius's* character, before he was converted by *Peter's* preaching?

Object. 6. 'Tis farther objected, that the Heathen had some means of salvation,

which took their first rise from divine revelation, as appears from several rules and modes of worship, which they had, by tradition, from the *Jews*. It was a generally received opinion among them, that the sins they committed, were, some way or other, to be expiated, or some atonement was to be made for them; upon which account they offer'd sacrifices, and, in order thereunto, had their temples, altars, and priests, consecrated for that purpose; which is something more than they had learnt from the law of nature.

Ans. This argument has very little weight in it; 'tis true, it seems to allow that there is a necessity of persons being, at least, in a small degree, apprised of some doctrines, which first took their rise from divine revelation: but that which was transmitted to the church, pure and uncorrupt, was handed down to several nations by uncertain tradition, with a great mixture of corruption; so that it is hard to find such a resemblance between them, as would denominate them of divine original. But suppose they had a conviction that sin was to be expiated by sacrifice; yet they had no manner of *Idea* concerning the reference, of those sacrifices they offer'd, to Christ, which, as the Apostle observes, was the only thing, in those sacrifices, that were performed by a divine warrant, which had a tendency to *take away sin, or make them that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience*^z; and therefore, when the *Jews* offer'd sacrifices, and observed several other rites of worship, which were instituted by God, yet, inasmuch as they rested in the external performance thereof, and were destitute of faith in Christ, and other religious duties that were to attend them, they were reckoned no better than *vain oblations*^a, or unprofitable services: How much more might all the rites of worship, observed by the Heathen, be deem'd so? Therefore this does not give us sufficient ground to conclude, that they had the means of salvation, who were destitute of divine revelation, and faith in Christ.

III. It is farther observed, in this *Answer*, that Christ is the Saviour only of his body the church. This seems to obviate an objection that might be brought against the impossibility of attaining salvation, without faith in Christ; for

^v Mark x. 21.

^z Heb. ix. 9.

^a 1st Cor. i. 13.

546 *Concerning the visible and invisible Church.*

some will be ready to conclude, that Christ may be a Saviour, by his death, to those who are strangers to him, and not members of his body the church, and therefore 'tis added, that he is the Saviour only of such; which is what several understand, when they say, that there is no salvation out of the pale, or inclosure of the church. This is rather to be explained than denied; and it will appear, from what is said in the following *Answers*, wherein the visible church is described, as including in it those who profess the true religion; and the invisible church is called *the body*, of which Christ is the *Saviour*^b; and the members thereof are said to be made partakers of union and communion with him, and to be inseparably joined to him, as their Head and Husband, when they are effectually called; so that these have an interest in that salvation, which he has procured. From hence we have ground to conclude, that he will save none by his merits, but such who are made partakers of the internal graces of the Spirit, and are united to him by a lively faith, founded on divine revelation; which is agreeable to what has been before maintained in this *Answer*, which establishes the necessity of divine revelation, or the impossibility of persons attaining salvation by framing their lives according to the light of nature, who never heard of the gospel, nor of Jesus Christ, the sum and substance thereof.

If this be reckoned an hard saying, tending to lessen the mercy of God, with respect to the objects thereof, it must be consider'd, that we have no other rule of judging, concerning this matter, but what is contained in scripture. If God has therein made known to his people the only way of salvation, we have no warrant to extend it farther than he has done; or to say, that because he can apply his grace in such methods, as are altogether unknown to us, that therefore he will do it, is no just or conclusive argument. And the great design of all that has been said, in this *Answer*, is to induce us to set the highest value on Christ, and his gospel; to adore and magnify him for the privileges which we enjoy, in being favour'd with it, and to put us upon improving it to the best purposes; for, if they are excluded from the benefits thereof, who never heard of it, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation*^c?

^b Eph. v. 23;

QUEST. LXI. *Are all they saved who bear the gospel, and live in the church?*

ANSW. All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible church, are not saved, but they only who are true members of the church invisible.

QUEST. LXII. *What is the visible church?*

ANSW. The visible church is a society made up of all such as, in all ages, and places of the world, do profess the true religion, and of their children.

QUEST. LXIII. *What are the special privileges of the visible church?*

ANSW. The visible church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government, of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies, and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.

QUEST. LXIV. *What is the invisible church?*

ANSW. The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head.

THEY who are made partakers of Christ's redemption, and are brought into a state of salvation, have been before

^c Heb. ii. 3.

described,

The word Church, how used in Scripture and other Writings. 547

described, as members of Christ's body the church; and we are now led to consider them as brought into this relation to him, and accordingly are to enquire in what sense they are members of Christ's church, and so to speak of this church as to its nature, constitution, subjects, and privileges. And,

I. What we are to understand by the word *Church*, as we find it applied in scripture.

1. It is sometimes used to signify any assembly that is met together, whatever be the design of their meeting. Though, indeed, it is very seldom taken in this sense in scripture; nevertheless, there are two or three places in which 'tis so understood: Thus the multitude that met together at *Ephesus*, who made a riot, crying out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, are called a church; for the word is the same, which we generally so render, in *Acts* xix. 32. Our translators, indeed, render it, *The assembly was confused*; and, in *Ver.* 39. 'tis said, *This matter ought to be determined in a lawful assembly*, that being an unlawful one; and, in *Ver.* 41. *The town-clerk dismiss'd the assembly*; in all which places, the word, in the Greek^a, is the same which we, in other places, render *Church*; and the reason why our translators have render'd it *Assembly*, is, because the word *Church* is used, in a very uncommon sense, in these places; and we do not find it taken in that sense in any other part of scripture.

2. 'Tis frequently used, by the *Fathers*, metonymically, for the place in which the church met together for religious worship, and so it is often taken among us, and some other reformed churches, as well as the *Papists*; but it does not sufficiently appear that it is ever so understood in scripture. 'Tis true, some suppose, that it is taken in this sense in *1 Cor.* xi. 18. where 'tis said, *When ye come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you*; and, they think, it is farther explained, and proved to be taken in this sense, from what the Apostle adds, in *Ver.* 20. *When ye come together into one place*; and also from what is said in *Ver.* 22. *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* From whence they conclude, that the Apostle means nothing else but the place where they were convened together, and,

more especially, because 'tis here opposed to their own houses.

But to this it may be replied, that, in the first of these *Verses* but now mention'd, viz. *When ye come together in the church*, it may be very easily understood of particular persons met together with the rest of the church; and when it is said, in *Ver.* 20. that *when ye come together into one place*, this does not refer to the place in which they were assembled^c; but to their meeting together with one design, or accord. And when it is said, in *Ver.* 22. *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* the opposition is not between their own houses and the place where they were met together; but the meaning is, that by your not eating and drinking in your own houses, but doing it in the presence of the church, or the assembly of God's people that are met together, you are not only chargeable with indecency, and interrupting them in the work which they are come about, but you make a kind of schism among them, as doing that which they cannot, in conscience, approve of, or join with you in; and this you are ready to call caprice, or humour, in them, and hereby you despise them. And, indeed, the place of worship cannot, properly speaking, be said to be the object of contempt; therefore the Apostle does not use the word, in this metonymical sense, for the place of worship, but for the worshipping assembly.

Object. The word *Synagogue* is often taken metonymically, in scripture, for the place where persons were assembled to worship: Thus our Saviour is said sometimes to *teach in the synagogues of the Jews*^f; and elsewhere we read of one, concerning whom the *Jews* say, *He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue*^g; and elsewhere the Psalmist, speaking concerning the church's enemies, says, *they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land*^h; and the Apostle *James*, adapting his mode of speaking to that which was used among the *Jews*, calls the church of God a *synagogue*, *If there come unto your assembly*, or *synagogue*, as it is in the margin, *a man with a gold ring, &c.*ⁱ; where the word is taken for the place where they were assembled; therefore we have as much reason to understand the word *Church* for the place where the church meets together.

^a ἐκκλησία.

^c The words ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, when used elsewhere, cannot be understood of the place where persons were met, but of the unanimity of those who were engaged in the same action; and therefore it is render'd *Simul*, in *Acts* iii. 1. and *Chap.* iv. 26.

^f *Matt.* iv. 23.

^g *Luke* vii. 5.

^h *Psal.* lxxiv. 8.

ⁱ *James* ii. 2.

Answer.

548 *Places of Worship called Churches. Of their first Erection.*

Answ. 'Tis true, the word *Synagogue*, in most of these scriptures, is taken for the place where persons meet together on a religious account, though it is very much to be doubted whether it be to be understood so in the last of the scriptures refer'd to, and therefore our translators render it *Assembly*; and so the meaning is, when you are met together, if a poor man come into your assembly, you despise him: But suppose the word *Synagogue* were to be taken in this, as it is in the other scriptures, for the place of worship, and that, by a parity of reason, the word *Church* may be taken in the same sense; all that can be infer'd from hence is, that they, who call the places of worship *Churches*, speak agreeable to the sense, though it may be not the express words of scripture: But this is so trifling a controversy, that it is not worth our while to say any thing more to it.

The learned *Mede*^k insists largely on it, in a discourse, founded on those words of the Apostle before-mentioned, *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* in which he attempts to prove, that the Apostle, by *the church*, means the place of worship, from the opposition that there is between their *own houses*, and *the church of God*, the inconclusiveness of which argument has been before consider'd. What he farther says, to prove that there were places, in the Apostle's days, appropriated, or set apart, for divine worship; and, in particular, that the room in which they first met together, on the day of our Saviour's resurrection, and eight days after, in which they were honoured with his presence, was the same in which he eat his last Passover with them, and instituted the Lord's Supper, and that it was in that place that they constantly met together for worship, and that therein the seven deacons were afterwards chosen, mentioned in *Acts* vi. and that after this a goodly church was erected on the same spot of ground; these are no other than uncertain conjectures. That they met together in an apartment, or convenient room, in the dwelling-house of some pious disciple, is very probable; but his observation from its being an upper room, as freest from disturbance, and nearest to heaven, seems to be too trifling for so great a man. And what he says farther, in defence of it, as supposing that this is what is intended by their *breaking bread from house*

to house, in *Acts* ii. 4, 6. is not so agreeable to the sense of the *Greek* words^l, as our translation, which he militates against, and supposes, that it ought to be render'd *in the house*, that is, in this house appointed for the same purpose.

What he farther adds, to prove that there were particular places appropriate for worship, in the three first *Centuries*, by referring to several quotations out of the *Fathers*, who lived in those ages, is not to be contested; though the objection he brings against this being universally true, taken from what *Origen*, *Minutius Felix*, *Arnobius*, and *Lactantius* say, concerning the Christians, in their time, declining to build them, after they had been disturb'd and harass'd, by various persecutions, seems to have some weight in it, and is not sufficiently answer'd by him. What he says on this subject, may be consulted in the place before-mentioned.

All that we shall say, as to this matter, is, that it is beyond dispute, that, since the church was obliged to convene together for religious worship, it was necessary that the usual place, in which this was performed, should be known by them. But it still remains uncertain, whether, though, at some times, in the more peaceable state of the church, they met constantly in one place, they did not, at other times, adjourn from place to place, or sometimes convene in the open air, in places where they might meet with less disturbance from their enemies. All, who are conversant in the history of the church in those ages, know, that they often met, especially in times of persecution, in caves, and other subterraneous places, near the graves of those who had suffer'd martyrdom, in which their end was not only to encourage them to bear the like testimony to Christianity, that they had done, but that they might be more retired and undisturbed in their worship.

But, to add nothing more on this subject, as being of less moment, that which I would principally militate against is, what that excellent writer, but now mentioned, attempts to prove, in his following *Dissertation*^m, concerning the reverence that is due to these churches; not only whilst divine duties are performed therein, but at other times, as supposing that they retain a relative sanctity, which calls for veneration at all times. The main stress of his argument is taken

^k See his Works, Vol. I. Book II. Pag. 405, & seq.

^l Κατ' οἶκον.

^m See Pag. 432, & seq.

from

from the sanctity of those places, which, by divine appointment, were consecrated for worship, under the ceremonial law; and the reverence that was express'd by persons when they enter'd into them, which, by a supposed parity of reason, he applies to those places which are erected for worship under the gospel-dispensation.

To which it may be replied, that it does not follow, that because the tabernacle and temple had a relative holiness in them, that therefore the same thing is applicable to the places of worship under the gospel-dispensation. For the temple was a type of God's presence among men, and in particular of the incarnation of Christ, which was a glorious instance thereof; and it was an ordinance for their faith in this matter, and therefore holy. And besides, there was a visible external symbol of God's presence in these places, whose throne was upon the *mercy seat*, between the cherubims, in the holy of holies; and therefore this might well be called a *holy place*, even when worship was not performed in it: But it is certain, that other places of worship, and, in particular, the synagogues were not then reckoned so, when no worship was performed in them, though they were erected for that purpose; and our Saviour seems to intimate, that the holiness of places is taken away under the gospel-dispensation, as appears by his reply to the woman of *Samaria*, when speaking concerning their *fathers worshipping in that mountain, viz. in the temple that was erected on mount Gerizzim*, says, that *the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*^a, that is, no place shall be so consecrated for religious worship, as that it shall be more acceptable there than elsewhere, and consequently no veneration is to be paid to any such place more than another, where the same worship may be performed^o. But this is lit-

tle other than a digression from our present design, which is to shew, that the word *Church*, in scripture, is, for the most part, if not always, taken for an assembly of Christians met together for religious worship, according to the rules which Christ has given for their direction herein.

The *Hebrew* word, in the Old Testament, by which the church of the *Jews* is signified, is generally render'd the *Congregation*^p, or assembly; so that, in our translation, we never meet with the word *Church* in the Old Testament; yet what is there called the *Congregation*, or assembly of the *Israelites*, might, very properly, be called a *Church*, inasmuch as it is so stiled in the New Testament: Thus 'tis said, concerning *Moses*, that *he was in the church in the wilderness*^q. But 'tis certain the word *Church* is peculiarly adapted, in the New Testament, to signify the Christian church worshipping God, according to the rules prescribed by our Saviour, and others, deliver'd by his Apostles, under the Spirit's direction; which is the sense in which we are to understand it, in speaking to these *Answers*. And this leads us to consider,

II. That the church is distinguished into *visible* and *invisible*, each of which are particularly defined, and will be farther insisted on, under some following *Heads*; but before this, we may offer something, by way of premisal, concerning the reason of this distinction. The word *Church*, according to the grammatical construction thereof, signifies a number of persons that are called; and, in its application to this present subject, every one, who is a member thereof, may be said to be called to be made partakers of that salvation which is in Christ. Now, as there is a twofold calling spoken of in scripture, to wit, one visible and external, whereby some are made partakers of the external privileges of the gospel,

^a John iv. 20, 21.

^o It may be observed, that though the learned author before-mentioned gives sufficient evidence, from the *Fathers*, that there were several places appropriated, and some erected, for divine worship, during the *three first Centuries*; and he thinks, that whether they were consecrated or no, there was a great degree of reverence paid to them, even at such times, when divine service was not performed in them: Yet he does not produce any proof for this out of the writings of the *Fathers*, in those *Centuries*; and it is impossible that he should; for, from *Eusebius's* account of this matter, it appears that the consecration of churches was first practised in the *Fourth Century*, [Vid. *ejusd. Hist. Eccl. Lib. X. cap. 3.*] As for the quotations that Mr. *Mede* brings from *Chrysostom* and *Ambrose*, to prove that reverence was paid to the churches in their time, it must be observed, that they lived in the *Fourth Century*, in which churches being not only appropriated, but consecrated for publick worship, it is no wonder to find the *Fathers* of that age expressing a reverence for them. Nevertheless, it is very evident, from the words of these *Fathers* there cited, that they intend thereby nothing else but a reverent behaviour, which ought to be express'd by those who come into the church to perform any act of divine worship; and this we are far from denying, whether the external rites of consecration be used or no. As for his quotation taken from *Tertullian*, who lived in the end of the *Second Century*, it don't prove that he thought that reverence ought to be express'd to the places of worship, but that the highest reverence ought to be used in the acts of worship, and particularly in prayer, which is an undoubted truth, whether we worship God in the church, or any where else.

^p *צבא*

^q Acts vii. 38.

and all the ordinances thereof; the other internal, and saving, whereby others are made partakers of those special and distinguishing blessings, which God bestows on the heirs of salvation. The former of these our Saviour intends, when he says, *Many are called, but few are chosen*^a; the latter is what the Apostle speaks of, when he connects it with *justification* and *glorification*^b. Now they who are called in the former of these senses, are included in that branch of the distinction which respects the *visible* church; the latter are members of that church which is stiled *invisible*; the former are members of Christ by profession; the latter are united to him, as their Head and Husband, who are made partakers of spiritual life from him, and shall live for ever with him. The members of the visible church are the children of God, as made partakers of the external dispensation of the covenant of grace; such God speaks of, when he says, *I have nourished and brought up children*^c; and elsewhere he says, concerning the church of the *Jews*, who were externally in covenant with him, *Israel is my son, even my first-born*^d: But the members of the invisible church, are the children of God by faith^e; and because children, in this sense, therefore *heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*^f. These things must particularly be insisted on; and accordingly,

I. We shall speak something concerning the invisible church, which is described, in one of the *Answers* we are explaining, as containing the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gather'd into one, under Christ their Head.

1. They are said to be elect, and subject to Christ their Head; upon which account, some have included, in this number, the holy angels, inasmuch as they are stiled, by the Apostle, *elect angels*^g; and Christ is, in some respects, their Head, as the Apostle calls him, *The Head of all principality and power*^h; and elsewhere the church is said to come to an *innumerable company of angels*ⁱ. But though they are, indeed, elected, it may be questioned, whether they were chosen in Christ, as the elect among the children of men are said to be; and, though Christ be stiled their Head; yet his headship over them doth not include

in it those things that are implied in his being the Head of his chosen people, as he is the Head of the covenant of grace, on which their salvation is founded; or *the Captain of their salvation*, as he is stiled^j, who, having purchased them by his blood, brings them into a state of grace, and then to glory. For these, and such-like reasons, I would not assert that angels are properly a part of Christ's invisible church, and therefore it only includes those that are elected to salvation among the children of men.

2. They are farther described as such, who have been, are, or shall be gather'd into one, under Christ the Head; therefore there is a part of them that are not actually brought in to him. These our Saviour speaks of, under the metaphor of sheep, who were *not of this fold*, concerning whom he says, *Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice*^k. And there is another part of them, who are triumphant in heaven, as well as those that are actually called by the grace of God, who are in their way to heaven, struggling, at present, with many difficulties, through the prevalency of corruption, and conflicting with many temptations, and exposed to many evils that attend this present state. These different circumstances of those who are brought in to Christ, give occasion to that known distinction between the church *triumphant* and *militant*.

Object. To that part of this description of the invisible church, which includes in it those that shall be gather'd unto Christ, it is objected, that no one can be said to be a member of this church, who is not actually brought in unto him; for that would be to suppose, that unconverted persons might be members thereof, and consequently that Christ is their Head, Shepherd and Saviour; tho' they be characterized, in scripture, as children of wrath, running in all excess of riot, refusing to submit to him, and neglecting that great salvation which is offer'd in the gospel: How can such be members of Christ's church, and that in the highest sense thereof?

And it is farther objected, against the account given of the invisible church, in this *Answer*, that a part of those who are said to be the members thereof, are consider'd, at present, as not existing; and therefore it must be a very improper,

^a Matt. xx. 16.

^b Rom. viii. 17.

^c John x. 16.

^d Rom. viii. 30.

^e 1 Tim. v. 21.

^f Isai. i. 2.

^g Coloss. ii. 10.

^h Exod. iv. 22.

ⁱ Heb. xii. 22.

^j Gal. iii. 16.

^k Chap. ii. 10.

if not absurd, way of speaking, to say, that such are members of Christ's church.

Ans. I am not inclined to extenuate those expressions of scripture, which represent unconverted persons as children of wrath, in open rebellion against God, and refusing to submit to him; nor would I say any thing from whence such might have the least ground to conclude that they have a right to any of the privileges of God's elect, or Christ's invisible church, or that they are included in that number; for that would be to expose the doctrine of election to one of the main objections that is brought against it, as though it led to licentiousness: Nevertheless, let it be consider'd, that this *Answer* treats of the invisible church; therefore whatever privileges are reserved for them, who, though elected, are in an unconverted state, these are altogether unknown to them; and it would be an unwarrantable presumption for them to lay claim to them. However, we must not deny that God knows who are his, who are redeemed by Christ, and what blessings, pursuant thereunto, shall be applied to them: He knows the time when they shall be made a willing people, in the day of his power, and what graces he designs to work in them: He considers the elect in general, as given to Christ, and Christ as having undertaken to do all that is necessary to fit them for the heavenly blessedness.

Moreover, we must not suppose but that God knows, without the least doubt and uncertainty, the whole number of those who shall appear with Christ, in glory, at his second coming; for things that are future to us, are present, with respect to him, as with one single view, he knows all things, past, and to come, as well as present; and therefore, if the expression made use of be thus qualified, which is agreeable to the design of this *Answer*, I cannot see that the objection has sufficient force to overthrow it, any more than those arguments that are usually brought against the doctrine of election, can render it less worthy to be received by us.

As for the other branch of the objection, that they, who are not *in being*, cannot be denominated members of Christ's church in any sense: Though it be allowed, that such cannot be, at present, the subjects of any privileges; yet we must consider, that, since God seeth not as man seeth, they may, in his e-

ternal purpose to save them, be consider'd as the objects thereof, and therefore, in his account, be reckoned members of Christ's invisible church, that is, such as he designs to bring into being, and afterwards to make them meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light; therefore I see no reason to except against this mode of speaking, in which they are described as such, who shall be gather'd under Christ, their Head: However, if the objection only respected the propriety, or impropriety, of a word, provided it had not a tendency to overthrow the doctrine of God's certain and peremptory election, I would not militate against it.

3. This church, which is said to consist of the whole number of the elect, is stiled *invisible*; by which we are not to understand, that their election of God cannot be known by themselves, since we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to conclude, that believers may attain the assurance thereof in this life: But it is so called, because many of them have finished their course in this world, and are enter'd into that state, in which they are, with respect to those that live here, no more seen.

Moreover, the number of those who are stiled the members of this church, cannot be determined by any creature. 'Tis only known to God; and that grace, which any of them experience, how far soever they may arrive to the knowledge of it themselves, cannot be said to be certainly and infallibly known by others; and therefore the Apostle says, concerning them, that *their life is hid with Christ in God*^a.

However, though this church be, at present, invisible, yet when the whole number of the elect shall be brought in to Christ, and, as the Apostle speaks, *Gathered together unto him*^c, then it shall no longer remain invisible; for *when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory*^d. We may farther observe, concerning the church, as thus described,

(1.) That it has many glorious characters given of it: Thus it is frequently called Christ's spouse, in the *Song of Solomon*, by which he seems to intend more than what could well be said concerning the Jewish church; for the description there given of it, as *being all fair, and without spot*^e, is rather applicable to the state in which the saints shall be hereafter, than that in which they are

^a Coloss. iii. 3.

^c 2 Thess. ii. 1.

^d Coloss. iii. 4.

^e Canticle. iv. 7, & seq.

at present; and therefore I am inclined to think, that he speaks of the invisible church, or the election of grace. And this character, given of them, is taken from that conjugal union which there is between Christ and believers; on which account 'tis said elsewhere, *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel*^h; and the Psalmist describes it, in a very elegant manner, as thus related to Christ, when he says, *upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir*ⁱ; and then speaks of it, as arrived to the highest pitch of honour and happiness, when introduced into the king's presence *in rayment of needle-work, with gladness and rejoicing, being brought into his palace*^k; and the Apostle calls it, *The general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written*^l, or, as it is in the margin, *enrolled in heaven*; and it is also considered, when *presented by Christ to himself*, or to his own view at last, being brought to perfection, as a *glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy, and without blemish*^m. In this respect it may be called, *The holy catholic church*, though many, without sufficient ground, understand those words of the Creed, in which it is so called, in a sense very different from, and inferior to it.

(2.) This invisible church is but one body, and therefore not divided, like the visible church, into many particular bodies, as will be observed under a following *Head*. This seems to be the meaning of that expression, in which it is said, *My Dove, my undefiled is but one*ⁿ.

(3.) It is not the seat of human government, as the visible church is; nor are persons said to be received into its communion. And whatever officers Christ has appointed, to secure the order, and to promote the edification of his churches, these have nothing to do in the church, considered as invisible; however, it is eminently under Christ's special government, who is the Head, as well as the Saviour thereof.

(4.) There are many special privileges, which belong to it, that include in them all the graces and comforts, which are applied to them by the Holy Spirit; and

so they are considered, as enjoying union and communion with Christ, in grace and glory, as being called, justified, sanctified, and many of them assured of their interest in Christ here, and all of them shall be glorified with him hereafter. These privileges are insisted on, in several following *Answers*; for which reason we pass them over at present, and proceed to consider another of the *Answers*, which we are to explain: And accordingly,

II. We have an account of the *visible* church, which is described as a society, made up of all such, who, in all ages, and places of the world, profess the true religion, and of their children. In this description of the church, we may observe,

1. That it is called visible, not only because the worship performed therein, and the laws given to those particular churches, of which it consists, are visible; but its members are so, or known to the world; and the profession they make of the true religion, or subjection to Christ, as their Head and Sovereign, is open, free, and undisguised, whereby they are distinguished from the rest of the world.

2. It is called a *Society*, which denomination it takes from the communion which its members have with one another: But, inasmuch as the word is in the singular number, as denoting but one body of men, it is to be enquired whether this be a proper mode of speaking, though frequently used.

(1.) It is allowed, by all Protestants, that there are, and have been, ever since the first preaching of the gospel by the Apostles, many particular churches in the world^o; and this is agreeable to what we often read of in the New Testament, as the Apostle *Paul* directs his epistles to particular churches; such as that at *Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, &c.* Some of these were larger, others smaller, as denoting, that no regard is to be had to the number of persons of which each of them consists: Thus we read of churches in particular houses^p; and these may each of them, without the least impropriety of expression, be stiled a

^h Isai. liv. 5.

ⁱ Psal. xlv. 9.

^k Ver. 14, 15.

^l Heb. xii. 23.

^m Eph. v. 27.

ⁿ Cant. vi. 9.

^o The *Papists*, indeed, pretend that there is no other church in the world, but that which they stile catholic and visible, of which the Bishop of Rome is the head; but we may say, in answer to this vain boast, as it is said concerning the church in *Sardis*, in *Rev. iii. 1. Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* Protestants, though they speak oftentimes of the visible church as one, yet they don't deny but that there are many particular churches contained in it. See the *Assembly's Confession of Faith*, Chap. 25. §. 4.

^p 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

visible church, for the reasons above-mentioned.

(2.) It must also be allowed, on the other hand, that the church is spoken of in the singular number, in scripture, as though it were but one: Thus 'tis said, that *Saul made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison*^a; and, speaking of himself, he says, *Concerning zeal persecuting the church*^b; and elsewhere, that, *beyond measure, he persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*^c. Now it is certain, that it was not one particular church that he directed his persecuting rage against; but all the churches of Christ, where-ever he came, especially those in *Judea*, which he speaks of in the plural number^d; by which he explains what he means, by his *persecuting the church of God*; for 'tis said, *He which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroy'd*^e; and elsewhere it is said, *God hath set some in the church; first, Apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers*^f; by which we are to understand all the churches; for the Apostles were not pastors of any particular church, but acted as pastors in all the churches where-ever they came, though every church had its own respective pastor set over it, who was, in a peculiar manner, related to it; yet all these churches are called, in this place, *the church*; therefore we are not to contend about the use of a word, provided it be rightly explained, whether persons speak of the church, in the singular, or churches in the plural number. If we speak of the church, as though it were but one, the word is to be taken collectively for all the churches of Christ in the world. This the Apostle explains, when he speaks of them all, as though they were *one body*, under the influence of the same *Spirit, called in one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all*^g; this is that *unity of the Spirit which they were to endeavour to keep*, and so to act agreeably to their faith herein; and, in this respect, we freely allow that all the churches of Christ are one; there is but one foundation on which they are built, one rule of faith, one way to heaven, in which they all professedly walk. Moreover, the churches of Christ have not only communion with one ano-

ther, in their particular societies, but there is a communion of churches, whereby they own one another; as walking in the same fellowship with themselves, express a sympathy with each other in afflictive circumstances; and rejoice in the edification and flourishing state of each other. In these respects, we consider the churches as one, and so call them all, the church of Christ.

Nevertheless, this is to be understood with certain limitations; and therefore we are not to suppose that the church; as the seat of government, is one; or that there is one set of men, who have a warrant to bear rule over the whole; that is, over all the churches of Christ; for none suppose that there is one universal pastor of the church, except the *Papists*. All Protestants, however they explain their sentiments about the catholic visible church, allow, that the seat of government is in each particular church, of which no one has any right to give pastors to other churches, or to appoint who shall be admitted into their respective communion.

(3.) There is another thing in this description of the visible church, which stands in need of being explained and defended, when it is said, that it consists of all such as, in all ages, and places of the world, do profess the true religion: If nothing be intended hereby, but that no one has a right to the privilege of communion of saints; or fit to be received into any church of Christ, but those who profess the true religion, namely, the faith on which it is built; this I am far from denying; for that would be to suppose that the church professes one faith, and some of its members another; or that it builds up what it allows others to throw down.

But I am a little at a loss to account for the propriety of the expression, when the church is said to be a society, professing the true religion, *in all ages*. It cannot be supposed that the church, or churches, that are now in being, are any part of that society which profess'd the true religion in *Moses's* time, or in the apostolick age; but it is principally the propriety of expression that is to be excepted against; for, I suppose, nothing is intended hereby, but that as the church, in every respective foregoing age, consisted of those who embraced the true religion; it consists of no other in our age;

^a Acts viii. 3.
^b Eph. iv. 4-6.

^c Phil. iii. 6.

^d Gal. i. 13.

^e Ver. 22.

^f Ver. 23.

^g 1 Cor. xii. 28.

554 *The Concern of Churches for the Children of their Members.*

There is one thing more which I would take leave to observe in this description of the church, which renders it incomplete, inasmuch as it speaks of it as consisting of those who profess the true religion; but makes no mention of that bond of union which constitutes every particular branch of this universal church, a church of Christ. It speaks, indeed, of those qualifications which belong to every one as a Christian, which is a remote, though necessary condition of being received into church-communion; but takes no notice of that mutual consent, which is the more immediate bond by which the members of every church coalesce together: But this we may have occasion to speak to, under a following *Head*.

The last thing I observe, in this description of the visible church, is, that it consists not only of the professors of the true religion, but of their children; this is rather to be explained than denied: However, I cannot but observe, that many have run too great lengths in what they have asserted concerning the right of children to this privilege. Some of the *Fathers* have not only consider'd them as members of the church, but brought them to the Lord's Table, and given them the bread dip'd in the wine, the same way as food is applied to infants, when they were too young to discover any thing of the design thereof: That which led them into this mistake, was their misunderstanding the sense of our Saviour's words, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*^a; supposing that this was meant of their eating bread, and drinking wine in the Lord's Supper, though they might easily have known that this was not our Saviour's meaning; inasmuch as the Lord's Supper was not instituted till some time after, and, when instituted, it was not design'd to be reckon'd so necessary to salvation, as that the bare not partaking thereof should exclude from it. *Cyprian* gives an account of his administering it to an infant brought by her mother; and relates a circumstance attending it, that favours so much of superstition, in that grave and pious *Father*, that I forbear to mention it^a. And this was not only practis'd by him, but by several others in some following ages. And many in later ages speak of children as incomplete members of the church; and some suppose that this

is the result of their baptismal dedication; others, that it is their birth-right, and as the consequence hereof they have maintain'd, that when they come to be adult, they rather claim their right to church-communion than are admitted to it as those are, who are not the children of church-members, and as a farther consequence deduced from this supposition, they assert, that if they are guilty of vile enormities, and thereby forfeit this privilege, they are in a formal way to be excommunicated, and that it is a defect in the government of the churches in our day, that this is not practis'd by them.

This is not what is intended by children's being members of churches, together with their parents, in this *Answer*; but that which I think all will allow of, viz. that children being the property of parents, they are obliged to dedicate them, together with themselves, to God, and pursuant thereunto to endeavour to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, hoping that through his blessing on education, they may in his own time and way, be qualified for church-communion, and then admitted to it, that hereby the churches of Christ may have an addition of members to fill up the places of those who are call'd off the stage.

As to the concern of the church in this matter, which in some respect redounds to the advantage of the children of those who are members of it, they are oblig'd to shew their regard to them, so far as to exhort their parents, if there be occasion, to express a due concern for their spiritual welfare; or if they are defective herein, to extend their censure rather to the parents, than to the children, as neglecting a moral duty, and so acting unbecoming the relation they stand in to them. Thus concerning the description given of the visible church in this *Answer*, we shall now proceed to speak more particularly to it, and accordingly shall consider the former and present constitution and government thereof. And,

I. As to what concerns the state of the *Jewish* church before the gospel-dispensation; this was erected in the wilderness, and the laws by which it was govern'd, were given by God, and transmitted to *Israel* by the hand of *Moses*. There was a very remarkable occurrence preceding their being settled as a church, that we read of^b, in which God demanded an ex-

^a John vi. 53.

^a Vid. *Cypr. de Lapf. cap. 1. § 13.*

^b Exod. xix. 7, 8.

PLICIT consent from the whole congregation, to be his people, and to be govern'd by those laws he should give them, upon which they made a publick declaration, that *all that the Lord hath spoken we will do*. And Moses returns the words of the people unto the Lord. And soon after this there was another covenant-transaction between God and them, mention'd in a following Chapter, when Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all his judgments; and the people answered with one voice, saying, *All the words which the Lord hath said will we do*. And this was confirm'd by sacrifice, and he took half of the blood thereof, and put it in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar, and he took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of the people, upon which they repeat their engagement; *all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient*. And then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, *behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words*^c; and then we have an account of an extraordinary display which they had of the divine glory, *They saw the God of Israel, and did eat and drink*^d, which was a farther confirming this covenant. And upon some important occasions they renew'd this covenant with God, *avouch'd him to be their God*, and he condescended at the same time *to avouch them to be his peculiar people*^e. Thus they were settled in a church-relation by God's appointment, and their solemn covenant and consent to be his people.

After this we read of God's settling the form of their church-government, appointing those various ordinances and institutions which are contain'd in the ceremonial law, and settling a ministry among them, and giving directions concerning every branch of the work that was to be perform'd by them. Aaron and his Sons had the priesthood committed to them, who were to offer gifts and sacrifices; the High-Priest was to be chief minister in holy things, the other priests assistants to him in most branches of his office; and when the temple was built, and the service to be perform'd therein established, the Priests attended in their respective courses, each course entering on their ministry every sabbath^f, and there being twenty four courses^g, it came to their respective turns twice every year. The Por-

ters also, who were to wait continually at the avenues of the temple day and night, to prevent any unclean person or thing from coming into it, as well as its being plunder'd of the treasures that were laid up in chambers adjoining to it; these also ministr'd in their courses, the number whereof was the same with that of the priests^h. And the Singers who attended some parts of the worship ministr'd in their coursesⁱ.

And besides these, there were some appointed to represent the people, who were chosen to come up from their respective places of abode with the priests when they ministr'd in their courses; these are call'd *Stationary Men*. Dr. Lightfoot^k gives an account of them from some Jewish writers who treat on this subject; not that we have any mention of them in scripture; but they suppose that it took its rise from that law in Lev. i. 3, 4. where they who brought an offering to the Lord were obliged to be present, and to put their hands on the head thereof, as well as the Priests who had the main concern in this service. From hence it is inferred, that since, besides the sacrifices that were offer'd for particular persons, there were daily sacrifices offer'd in the behalf of the whole congregation; and because it was impossible for them to be present to bear a part in this service, it was necessary that some should be deputed to represent the whole body of the people, that so there might be a number present to assist in this service, that these acts of worship might be perform'd in the most publick manner; and inasmuch as this was to be perform'd daily, it was necessary that some should be deputed whose proper business it was to attend; and he thinks that as there were priests deputed to minister in their courses, so there was a number deputed to represent the people, who went up to Jerusalem with the priests of the respective course. And he farther adds, that at the same time that these were ministring in the temple; the people met together, and spent that week in those Synagogues which were near the place of their abode, in fasting, and other acts of religious worship, in which, though at a distance, they implor'd a blessing on the service that their brethren were performing.

As for the rest of the people, they were obliged to be present at Jerusalem,

^c Exod. xxiv. 3, 5. ^d Verse 11. ^e Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. ^f 2 Chron. xxiii. 4. ^g 1 Chron. xxiv. ^h 1 Chron. xxiii. 5. comp. with Ch. xxvi. ⁱ 1 Chron. xxiii. 5. comp. with Ch. xxv. ^k See his Works, Vol. I. p. 924, 925.

555 How Religion was promoted by the Jews in their Synagogues.

at the solemn and publick festivals performed three times a year ; and others of them, who had committed any sin that was to be expiated by sacrifice, were to come up thither to the temple at other times, and bring their sacrifices to atone for the guilt which they had contracted.

If it be said, that this was, indeed, a solemn method of worship, exceeding beautiful, and also had a circumstance in it, which was its glory, *viz.* that the temple-service was typical of Christ, and the way of salvation by him : But what methods were there to instruct the people in the doctrines of religion ? It would not much conduce thereunto for them to come up to *Jerusalem*, to worship at the three yearly festivals : How did they spend their sabbaths ? or, what acts of worship were they engaged in, in their respective places of abode ?

To this we answer, that God also appointed a sufficient number to be their ministers in holy things, helpers of their faith as to this matter, *viz.* not only the priests, but the whole tribe of *Levi*, whose place of residence was conveniently situated : They had forty eight cities in various parts of the land ; some of which were not far distant from any of the people. These instructed them in the way of God, the people sought the knowledge hereof from their mouths¹. And there were, besides the temple, several other places appointed for religious worship : These were of two sorts, namely,

1. The *Synagogues*, which were generally built in cities, of which hardly any were without them, if they consisted of a number of persons who were able to erect them, and had leisure, from their secular employments, to preside over, and set forward, the work to be performed therein^m ; and that was of a different nature from the temple-service, in which gifts and sacrifices were to be offer'd, God having expressly forbidden the erecting any altars elsewhere ; therefore the worship performed in them was prayer, reading and expounding the law and the prophets, and instructing the people in all other duties of religion, which were necessary to be performed in the conduct of their lives.

The manner of doing this, was not only by delivering set discourses, agreeable to

our common method of preachingⁿ, but holding disputations and conferences together about some important matters of religion : Thus the Apostle *Paul* disputed in the *synagogues*^o. This was done occasionally ; but the *Jews* met constantly in them for religious worship ; and our Saviour encouraged them herein with his presence and instructions : Thus 'tis said, not only that *he taught in their synagogues*, but that this was his constant practice ; for 'tis said, *He came to Nazareth ; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read^p*.

And there were also certain officers appointed over every synagogue : Thus we read sometimes of the *rulers of the synagogues*^q, whose business was to prevent the doing any thing that was indecent and disorderly ; and there were some persons from whom a word of exhortation was expected, who were called^r, *Ministers* thereof. And we are not to suppose that this method of promoting religion in the synagogues, was only practised in the last and most degenerate age of the *Jewish* church, but that they had their synagogues in the more early and purer ages thereof, which, if we had no express account of in the Old Testament ; yet it might be infer'd from this account thereof in our Saviour's time ; for certainly there were no methods used then by the *Jews* to instruct the people in matters of religion, that were not as necessary, and consequently in use, in foregoing ages. 'Tis true, we do not oftentimes read of *synagogues* in the Old Testament ; notwithstanding there is mention of them in that scripture, before refer'd to, in *Psal.* lxxiv. 8. in which the Psalmist complains, that *they had burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land* ; where the word being in the plural number, it cannot be meant, as the *Chaldee Paraphrast* renders it, of the temple. This appears from the context, in which he speaks of the *enemies of God roaring in the midst of the congregations* ; and, besides this, he expressly mentions their burning the temple, by *casting fire into the sanctuary of God, and casting down the dwelling-place of his name to the ground*, in *Ver.* 3, 7.

2. Besides these *synagogues*, there were

¹ Mal. ii. 7.

^m These were called *בתי מדרש* *Othoth*. See *Lightfoot's Works*, vol. I. Pag. 610—613. & *Viring. de Synag. Vet.* Pag. 530, & seq. And *Lightfoot* says, from one of the *Talmuds*, that there were no less than 460 synagogues in *Jerusalem*, Vol. I. Pag. 363, 370. and that the land was full of them, in which they met every sabbath, and some other days of the week.

ⁿ Acts xiii. 15, & seq. ^o Chap. xvii. 17, 19, 8.

^p Luke iv. 15, 16. ^q Mark v. 22. Luke

^r See more of this in those Pages of *Lightfoot*, before refer'd to.

other

The Proseuchæ, or Places appointed for Prayer by the Jews. 557

other places, in which publick worship was performed, called, *Places of prayer*^r. Mr. Mede gives an account, from *Epiphanius*, of the difference that there was between these and the *synagogues*, when he says, that a *proseucha*, or a place appointed for prayer, was a plot of ground, encompass'd with a wall, or some other-like mound, or inclosure, open above, much like to our courts; whereas a *synagogue* was a cover'd edifice, as our houses and churches are. He also adds, that the former of these were generally fixed in places without the cities, in the fields, in places of retirement; and that they were generally render'd more private, and fit for the work that was to be performed in them, by being surrounded with a plantation of trees; and he supposes, that these were not only made use of in our Saviour's and the Apostles time, but in foregoing ages; and that the grove that *Abraham* is said to have planted, in which he called on the name of the Lord^a, was nothing else but one of these convenient places, planted for that purpose, in which publick worship was performed, which seems very probable^x.

And we read, in scripture, concerning *high places*. These, as *Lightfoot* observes^y, are sometimes used, in scripture, in a commendable sense: Thus *Samuel* is said to go up into one of these *high places*^z, to perform some acts of religious worship; and we read of another *high place*, in which there was a company of prophets, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them, and they did prophesy^a. 'Tis true, in other scriptures, we read of them as abused by that idolatry that was perform'd in them^b. These the pious kings of *Judah*, who reformed religion, took away; and when it is said, in some of their reigns, that how much soever they destroy'd idolatrous worship, yet the *high places* were not taken away^c; that learned writer thinks, that they should not have been destroy'd, as places of worship, or publick assemblies, and therefore that this is not reckon'd as a blemish in the reign of those kings, that the high places were not taken away; for, whatever abuse there was, it consisted in that, sacrifice and incense were offered there, which were parts of worship confined to the temple; so that if they had not only reformed them from

the abuse of those that exercised their idolatry therein; but had also proceeded to reform this abuse of their sacrificing there, they might lawfully have met there to perform religious worship, which, it is supposed, they did in *synagogues*, high places, and groves, that were appointed for that purpose: Thus then they met together for religious worship in other places besides the *synagogues*.

Again, we read, in the New Testament, that *Paul* went, on the sabbath-day, out of the city of *Philippi*, by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made^d, where he also preached the word by which *Lydia* was converted; this some think to be one of those places where they resorted for prayer, and other publick worship: And others suppose, that the place mentioned in the gospel, which our Saviour resorted to, when it is said, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God^e, ought to be render'd, in that particular place where prayer was wont to be made to God^f: But the Greek words may as well be render'd as they are in our translation; and then it has no respect to any particular place of prayer, but imports his retirement to perform this duty. Thus we have endeavoured to prove, that the church of the Jews had other places in which worship was performed, besides the temple, which was of very great advantage for the propagating religion among them. We might have farther proceeded to consider their church-censures, ordained by God for crimes committed, whereby persons were cut off from among their people, by excommunication, when the crimes they were guilty of did not deserve death: But I shall not enlarge any farther upon this *Head*, but proceed to speak concerning the gospel-church, and so consider,

II. The methods taken, in order to the first planting and increase thereof, by the Apostles. When our Saviour had finished the work of redemption, after his resurrection, he alter'd the form of the church, and appointed his Apostles not only to signify this to the world, but to be instruments in erecting this new church. We have before consider'd these Apostles as qualified to be witnesses to Christ's resurrection, and also as having received a

^r Προσευχᾶι, Proseuchæ. ^s Εὐκτρίαι, προσευκτρίαι, Oratoria.
^y See Vol. I. Pag. 608. ^z 1 Sam. ix. 19. ^a Chap. x. 5. ^b 1 Kings
xi. 7. Chap. xii. 31. ^c 2 Kings xii. 3. xiv. 4. xv. 4. ^d Acts xvi. 13. ^e Luke vi. 12.
^f Ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τῇ αὐτῇ, in proseuchâ Dei.

^u Gen. xxi. 33.

^x See Mede's Works,

^y 1 Kings

^z Luke vi. 12.

558 *Of the first Preaching and Success of the Gospel.*

commission from him to preach the gospel to all nations, and an order to tarry at *Jerusalem* till they received those extraordinary gifts from the Holy Ghost, that were necessary for their performing the work they were to engage in; now, pursuant hereunto, they all of them resided at *Jerusalem*; and, a few days after Christ's ascension into heaven, the Holy Ghost was poured upon them *on the day of Pentecost*^e; upon which, they immediately began to exercise their publick ministry in that city, in which they had the advantage of publishing the gospel to a numerous concourse of people, who resorted thither, from various parts of the world, in which the *Jews* were dispersed, to celebrate that festival. Some suppose, that there was a greater number gather'd together in that city than was usual, it being one of those three feasts to which the *Jews* resorted from all the parts of the land: though a learned writer^h supposes, that the *Jews* were not obliged to come to this feast from other nations; neither were they, that came there, said, as these are, to dwell at *Jerusalem*; therefore he thinks that that which brought them here from the several parts of the world, was the expectation which the *Jews* generally had, that the *Messiah* would appear, and erect a temporal kingdom, and that *Jerusalem* was the place where he would fix his throne, and therefore they would be there to wait on him, and share the honours they expected from him.

But, whatever occasion brought them here, it was a seasonable opportunity for the gospel first to be preached; and accordingly *Peter* preached his first sermon to a multitude that were gather'd together, and therein exercised the gift of tongues, by which means his discourse was not only understood by men of different languages; but they had herein a plain proof that he was under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and he takes occasion to improve this amazing dispensation of providence, by telling them that it was an accomplishment of what had been before predicted by the prophet *Joel*; and then he preached Christ to them, declaring that he, and the rest of the Apostles, were all witnesses that God raised him from the dead, and exalted him by his right hand, and that, pursuant hereunto, this extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost was confer'd upon them.

The success of his first sermon was very remarkable; for there were added to the church, as the first fruits of his ministry, *three thousand souls*ⁱ. We also read, that *the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved*; and, soon after this, 'tis said, that *the number of the men, of whom the church consisted, was about five thousand*^k; a very large and numerous church, meeting, as is more than probable, in the same city, where we must conclude, that they fixed their abode, rather than that they returned to the respective places from whence they came, that they might have an opportunity to sit under the sound of the gospel, which was, at that time, preached no where else; and that which makes this more, probable, may be infer'd from the method taken for their subsistence in the world; there would have been no occasion for those who had possessions to sell them, and dispose of the price thereof to supply the exigencies of their fellow-members, had they not removed their habitations, and forsook all for the sake of the gospel.

This church had wonderful instances of the presence of God among them, which did more than compensate for the loss they must be supposed to sustain, as to their secular affairs. We read, for some time after this, of little else but success attending the gospel, and persecutions raised by the *Jews* against it, which rather tended to their own shame and confusion, than the extirpating of it; and when they so far prevail'd, at length, that, after the death of *Stephen*, the first martyr, a new persecution was begun, by the instigation of *Saul*, (as yet not converted to the faith) the consequence hereof being, the scattering of this church throughout the regions of *Judea* and *Samaria*^l, this was order'd for the furtherance of the gospel; for, where-ever they came, they preached, and many believed: But the Apostles, at the same time, obeying the order that was before given them, continued at *Jerusalem*^m, and there still remained a church in that city sitting under their ministry. This was wisely order'd by the providence of God, not only as an accomplishment of those predictions that respected the gospel's first being founded from thence, but that, in this church, a sufficient number might be train'd up for the exercise of the ministry in other places, when there should be

^e Acts ii. 1, 2.
^f Chap. viii. 1.

^h See *Lightfoot* on Acts ii. 5, *Vol. I. Pag. 751, 752.*
^m Chap. i. 4.

ⁱ Ver. 41, 42.

^k Chap. iv. 4.

The Conduct of the Apostles in planting Gospel-Churches. 559

occasion for it; and, in order hereto, they had some advantages which no schools of learning could afford them, for they had the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Here it was that the prophets and evangelists were first raised up, being immediately taught by God: This was the first scene of the gospel-church. Here it continued till the Apostles were order'd, by the Holy Ghost, to travel into those parts of the world, in which, by his direction, their ministry was to be exercised: The greatest part of them were order'd to those places, where some of the *Jews* resided; but *Paul* was ordained to exercise his ministry among the *Gentiles*. Accordingly we read, that *the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them*ⁿ. This divine command they immediately obey'd; and then we read of churches erected in various parts of the world by his ministry, who is stiled, *The Apostle of the Gentiles*.

There are several things observable in the exercise of his ministry:

1. Where-ever he came, he preached the gospel, and confirmed it by miracles, as occasion served; and this was attended with such wonderful success and expedition, that, without a remarkable hand of providence going along with him, the multitudes that were converted by his ministry, exceeded not only what might be done by one man, in the compass of his life, but several ages of men. At one time we read of him exercising his ministry from *Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum*^o; at other times, in several parts of *Asia Minor*; then in *Spain*, and at *Rome*, and some parts of *Greece*^p; so that, where-ever he came, his ministry was attended with wonderful success, as the *Roman* emperor says, *I came, I saw, I conquer'd*.

2. When the Apostle had, by the success of his ministry, prepared fit materials for a church, inasmuch as it would take up too much of his time to reside among them till they were provided with a pastor, and other officers, which were necessary to carry on the work that was begun in it, he sent for one of the *Evangelists*, who, as was before observed, were fitted for this service, by those extraordinary gifts, which they had received, while they continued in the church at *Jerusalem*. The office of these *Evangelists* seems to have been principally this;

that they were to *set in order the things that were wanting*, or left, by the Apostles, to be done, and *ordain elders in every city*, as the Apostle *Paul* intimates, when giving this charge to *Titus*^q, who appears to have been an *Evangelist*, particularly ordain'd to minister to him, to build upon the foundation he had laid. These *Evangelists* appear to have had all the qualifications for the ministry that the Apostles had, excepting what respected their having seen *Jesus*, whereby they were qualified to be witnesses of his resurrection; and they continued till they had performed that part of their work, in settling pastors, and other officers, in churches; and then they were ready to obey another call, to succeed the Apostles in some other places, and so perform the same work there.

3. While the Apostles were thus concerned for the gathering and building up of churches, and were assisted herein by the *Evangelists*, there was a continual intercourse between them and those churches, whose first rise was owing to the success of their ministry. Accordingly they conversed with them by *Epistles*; some of which they received by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as designed to be a rule of the churches faith in all succeeding ages. Some of these *Epistles* were written by other Apostles, but most of them by *Paul*^r, who sometimes desires to *know their state*; at other times, he informs them of *his own*, and the opposition he met with; or the success of his ministry, the persecutions he was exposed to for it, and the necessity of the churches, which required their contribution for their support; and therein he often enlarges on those important truths, which, had he been among them, would have been the subject of his ministry. This was necessary to strengthen their hands, and encourage them to persevere in that faith which they made profession of.

And to this we may add, that there were, upon several occasions, *Messengers* sent from the churches to the Apostle, to inform him of their state, to transmit to him those contributions which were necessary for the relief of other churches, and to give him that countenance, encouragement, and assistance, that his necessities required; and some of these were very excellent persons, the best that could be chosen out of the church for that service. The Apostle calls some of

ⁿ Acts xiii. 2. ^o Rom. xv. 19. ^p Ver. 28. ^q Tit. i. 5. ^r Phil. ii. 19. ^s Coloss. iv. 7. 2 Cor. i. 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

them, *The messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ*^a, which is an extraordinary character. Some think, he intends hereby that they were the *Messengers* of those churches, which churches are the glory of Christ, that is, the seat in which he displays his glory; others suppose, that he calls these *Messengers, the glory of Christ*, as they, by their wise and faithful conduct, promoted his glory, which was not dependent on, but illustrated thereby. Sometimes they were ministers of churches, sent occasionally on these errands: Thus *Epaphroditus* was a *messenger and minister of the church at Philippi*^b; and *Onesiphorus* was sent to strengthen and encourage the hands of the Apostle, when he was a prisoner at *Rome*, whom he speaks of with great affection, when he says, *He sought me out diligently, and found me, and was not ashamed of my chain*^c. These were very useful persons to promote the interest of Christ, which was carrying on by the Apostles, though it does not appear that this was a standing office in the church, their service being only occasional. Thus we have considered the Apostle, as engaged in gathering and building up churches, in such a way, as was peculiar to them in the first age of the gospel.

We shall now proceed to speak concerning that state and government of the church, that was design'd to continue longer than the Apostolick age, and is a rule to the churches of Christ in our day. We have before considered the *Evangelists* as succeeding the Apostles, in appointing officers over churches, directing them to fit persons, that might be called to this service, and instructing them how they should behave themselves in that relation; which was necessary, in that they were not to expect such extraordinary assistances from the Spirit of God, as the Apostles and the *Evangelists* had received, any more than pastors, and other church-officers, are to expect them in our day; which leads us to consider the nature, constitution, and government of the churches of Christ, in all the ages thereof. And,

I. What we are to understand by a particular church, and what is the foundation thereof. A church is a number of visible professors, called to be saints, or, at least, denominated, and, by a judgment of charity, esteemed of as saints; united together by consent, in order to their having communion with one another;

and testifying their subjection to Christ, and hope of his presence in all his ordinances; designing hereby to glorify his name, propagate his gospel and interest in the world, and promote their mutual edification in that holy faith, which is founded on the scripture-revelation; and, in order hereunto, they are obliged to call and set over them such pastors, and other officers, as God has qualified for that service, to be helpers of their faith, and to endeavour to promote their order, whereby the great and valuable ends of church-communion may be answer'd, and God therein be glorified. This description of a particular church is agreeable to, and founded on scripture, as may be easily made appear, by referring to several scriptures in the New Testament, relating to this matter. Accordingly we read that the members of Christ are characterized as saints by calling, or *called to be saints*^d; and the churches in *Macedonia* are said to *give their own selves to the Lord and to the Apostles, by the will of God*^e, to sit under their ministry, and follow their directions, so far as they imparted to them the mind of Christ, and might be helpers of their faith and order, to his glory; and we read of their professed *subjection unto the gospel of Christ*^f; and the church at *Ephesus* is farther described, as *built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, namely, the doctrines laid down by them, as the only rule of faith and obedience, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*. And, as to what respects their duty towards one another, they are farther said to *build up themselves in their most holy faith, and to keep themselves in the love of God*, that is, to do every thing, by the divine assistance, that is necessary, in order thereunto, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*^g; or, as it is said elsewhere, to *consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together*^h, inasmuch as this is an instituted means for the answering that great end. Many other scriptures might have been brought to the same purpose, tending to prove and illustrate the description of a gospel-church, as above-mentioned.

But this may also be evinced, in a method of reasoning from the laws of society, as founded on the law of nature, and applied to a religious society, which takes its rise from, and is built on divine

^a 2 Cor. viii. 23.

^b Phil. ii. 25.

^c 2 Tim. i. 16, 17.

^d Rom. i. 7.

^e 2 Cor. viii. 5.

^f Chap. ix. 13.

^g Jude, Ver. 20, 21.

^h Heb. x. 24, 25.

The Law of Nature and Scripture prove Church-communion. 561

revelation; and, in order hereunto, we shall lay down the following propositions.

(1.) It is agreeable to the law of nature, and the whole tenor of scripture, that God should be glorified by social worship, and that all the members of these worshipping societies should endeavour to promote the spiritual interest of one another. Man is, by the excellency of his nature, fitted for conversation, and, by his relation to others, who have the same capacities and qualifications, obliged hereunto; and, as the glory of God is the end of his being, it ought to be the end of all those intercourses, which we have with one another; and, as divine worship is the highest instance of our glorifying God, so we are, as intelligent creatures, obliged to worship him, in a social way.

(2.) It is the great design of Christianity to direct us how this social worship should be performed by us as Christians, paying a due regard to the gospel, and the glory of the divine perfections, as displayed therein, which is the subject-matter of divine revelation, especially that part thereof from whence the laws of Christian society are taken.

(3.) They who have been made partakers of the grace of God, are obliged, out of gratitude to him, the Author thereof, to proclaim his glory to the world; and as the experience thereof, and the obligations persons are laid under hereby, is extended to others, as well as our selves; so all, who are under like engagements, ought to be helpers of the faith and joy of each other, and to promote their mutual edification and salvation; and, that this may be done,

(4.) It is necessary that they consent, or agree, to have communion with one another in those duties in which they express their subjection to Christ, and desire to wait on him together in all his holy institutions.

(5.) The rule for their direction herein, is contained in scripture, which sets forth the Mediator's glory, as King of saints; gives a perfect directory for gospel-worship, and encouragement to hope for his presence therein, whereby it may be attended with its desired success.

(6.) Since Christ, in scripture, has described some persons as qualified to assist and direct us in this matter, as well as called them to this service, it is necessary that these religious societies should choose and appoint such to preside over them, who are stiled Pastors, after his

own heart, that may feed them with knowledge and understanding, whereby his ordinances may be rightly administered, and the ends of church-communion answered, to his glory, and their mutual advantage.

In this method of reasoning, the constitution of churches appears to be agreeable to the law of nature: Nevertheless, we are not to suppose with the *Eraſtians*, and others, that the church is wholly founded on the laws of civil society, as though Christ had left no certain rule by which it was to be govern'd, besides those that are common to all societies, as an expedient to maintain peace and order among them; for there are other ends to be answer'd by church-communion, which are more immediately conducive to the glory of Christ; and the promoting reveal'd religion, which the law of nature, and those laws of society, which are founded thereon, can give us no direction in. It is a great dishonour to Christ, the King and Head of his church, to suppose that he has left it without a rule to direct them in what respects the communion of saints; as much as it would be to assert that he has left it without a rule of faith. If God was so particular in giving directions concerning every part of that worship that was to be performed in the church before Christ's coming, so that they were not, on pain of his highest displeasure, to deviate from it, certainly we must not think that our Saviour has neglected to give those laws, by which the gospel-church is to be governed, which are distinct from what are contained in the law of nature.

And, from hence, it may be infer'd, that no church, or religious society of Christians, has power to make laws for its own government, in those things that appertain to, or are to be deem'd a part of religious worship. I don't say a church has no power to appoint some discretionary rules to be observ'd by those who are of the same communion, provided they are kept within due bounds, and Christ's kingly office be not hereby invaded. There is a very great controversy in the world, about the church's power to decree some things that are stiled indifferent; but persons are not generally agreed in determining what they mean by indifferent things. Some hereby understand those rites and ceremonies that are used in religious matters, which they call indifferent, because they are of less importance; whereas, by being made terms of communion, they cease to be indifferent;

562 *The Matter of a Church. Its Form, or Bond of Union.*

and whether they are of greater or less importance, yet if they respect a necessary mode of worship, conducive to the glory of God, so that hereby he is more honoured than he would be, by the neglect of it, this is to carry the *Idea* of indifference too far, and to extend the power of the church beyond its due bounds: for as the terms of communion are only to be fixed by Christ, and the means by which he is to be glorified, (which have in them the nature of ordinances, wherein we hope for his presence and blessing) must be sought for from him; so the church has not power to ordain, or give a sanction to them, without his warrant; therefore, when we speak of those indifferent matters, which the church has power to appoint, we mean those things which are no part of religious worship, but merely discretionary, which may be observed, or not, without any guilt contracted, or censure ensuing hereupon; which leads us to consider,

2. The matter of a church, or the character of those persons who are qualified for church-communion. We have already consider'd the church as a religious society; it is therefore necessary that all the members thereof embrace the true religion, and, in particular, that they deny none of those fundamental articles of faith, which are necessary to salvation. It is not to be supposed that the members of any society have a perfect unanimity in their sentiments about all religious matters, for that is hardly to be expected in this world; but they are all obliged, as the Apostle says, *to hold the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*^a; and publicly to avow, or maintain, no doctrine subversive of the foundation, on which the church is built. Reveal'd religion centers in Christ, and is refer'd to his glory, as Mediator; therefore every member of a church ought to profess their faith in him, and willingness to own him, as their Lord and Law-giver, and to give him the glory that is due to him, as a divine Person, and as one who is appointed to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. The Apostle gives a short, but very comprehensive description of those who are fit matter for a church, when he says, *We are the circumcision which worship God in the*

Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh^c. It follows, from hence, that every religious society is not a church; for false religions have been propagated among the Heathen, and others, in distinct societies of those who performed religious worship; but yet they had no relation to Christ, and therefore not reckoned among his churches.

On the other hand, we cannot determine concerning every member of a particular church, that his heart is right with God; for that is a prerogative that belongs only to the Searcher of hearts; 'tis the external profession that is our rule of judging. All are not in a state of salvation, who are church-members, as the Apostle says, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel*^d: He makes a distinction between a real subjection unto Christ by faith, and a professed subjection to him; as he says, concerning the church of the Jews; *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God*^e: nevertheless, they were all church-members, professedly or apparently devoted to God. Concerning such, we are bound, by a judgment of charity, to conclude, that they are what they profess themselves to be, till their conversation plainly gives the lie to their profession. The visible church is compared to the *net*, that had *good and bad fish* in it^f; or to the *great house*, in which are *vessels* of various kinds; *some to honour, and some to dishonour*^g; some fit for the master's use, others to be broken, as *vessels wherein is no pleasure*^h; some are sincere, others hypocrites: nevertheless, till their hypocrisy is made manifest, they are supposed to be fit matter for a church.

3. We are now to consider the form, or bond of union, whereby they are incorporated into a society, and so denominated a church of Christ. It is neither the profession of faith, nor a conversation agreeable thereunto, that constitutes a person a member of a particular church; for, according to the laws of society, there must be a mutual consent to walk together, or have communion one with another in all the ordinances which Christ has established. As the materials, of

^a Coloss. ii. 19.
¹ 2 Tim. iii. 10.

^c Philip. iii. 3.
² Jer. xxii. 28.

^f Rom. ix. 6.

^g Chap. ii. 28, 29.

^h Matt. xiii. 47.

The Church's Power to receive Persons into its Communion. 563

which a building consists, do not constitute that building, unless they are cemented and joined together; so the union of professing Christians, whereby they are joined together, and become one body, by mutual consent, is necessary to constitute them a church, as much as their professed subjection to Christ to denominate them a church of Christ. Hereby they become a confederate body; and as every one, in a private capacity, was before engaged to perform those duties which are incumbent on all men, as Christians, now they bring themselves, pursuant to Christ's appointment, under an obligation to endeavour, by the assistance of divine grace, to walk becoming the relation, they stand in, to each other; or, as the Apostle expresses himself, *Building up themselves on their most holy faith*¹, whereby the ends of Christian society may be answered, and the glory of Christ secured; and they have ground to expect his presence in waiting on him in all his holy institutions. By this means they, who were before consider'd as fit matter for it, are said to be united together, as a church of Christ. But, inasmuch as this principally respects the foundation, or erection of churches, there are other things necessary for their increase, and the maintaining that purity, which is the glory thereof, and thereby preventing their contracting that guilt which would otherwise ensue; which leads us to consider,

4. The power which Christ has given them, and the rules which he has laid down, which are to be observed by them in the admission to, and exclusion of persons from church-communion. And,

(1.) As to what respects the admission of members, that may fill up the places of those, whose relation to them is dissolved by death. Here we must consider, that it is highly reasonable that they should have all the satisfaction that is necessary, concerning the fitness of those for it, who are to be admitted into church-communion, and also enquire what terms, or conditions, are to be insisted on, and comply'd with, in order thereunto. We must not suppose that these are arbitrary, or such as a church shall please to impose; for it is no more in their power to make terms of communion, than it is to make a rule of faith, or worship. In this, a church differs from a civil society, where the terms of admission into it are arbitrary, provided

they do not interfere with any of the laws of God, or man: But the terms of Christian communion are fixed by Christ, the Head of his church; and therefore no society of men have a right to make the door of admission into their own communion straighter or wider than Christ has made it.

This is a matter in which some of the reformed churches differ among themselves, though the dissention ought not to arise so high as to cause any alienation of affection, or any degree of uncharitableness, so as to occasion any to think, that because they do not, in all things, agree, as to this matter, therefore they ought not to treat one another as those who hold the head, and are designing to advance the interest of Christ, in the various methods they are pursuing, in order thereunto. I think it is allowed, by most of the churches of Christ, at least those who suppose that persons have no right to church-communion, without the consent of that particular society, of which any one is to be made a member, that nothing short of a professed subjection to Christ, and a desire to adhere to him in all his offices, as well as worship him in all his ordinances, can be reckoned a term of church-communion. For we suppose the church to be built upon this foundation; and nothing short of it can sufficiently set forth the glory of Christ, as the Head thereof, or answer the valuable ends of church-communion. Therefore it follows, from hence, that as ignorance of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, disqualifies for church-communion; so do immoralities in conversation, both of which denominate a person to be alienated from the life of God, a stranger to the covenant of promise, and in subjection to Satan, the god of this world, which is inconsistent with a profess'd subjection to Christ. Therefore a mind rightly informed in the great doctrines of the gospel, with a conduct of life answerable thereunto, is to be insisted on, as a term of church-communion.

But that in which the sentiments of men are different, is with respect to the way and manner in which this is to be render'd visible, and whether some things, that are merely circumstantial, are to be insisted on, as terms of communion.

1. As to the former of these. That those qualifications, which are necessary to church-communion, ought to be, some way or other, made visible, this is taken

¹ Jude, Ver. 20.

554 Subjection to CHRIST to be professed; and how made visible.

for granted by many on both sides; and, indeed, without it the church could not be called *visible*, or a society of such as profess the true religion, and, together with it, their subjection to Christ. And this, in a more especial manner, must be made known to them, who are to hold communion with them, as called to be saints; which cannot, from the nature of the thing, be done, unless it be, some way or other, made to appear. If it be said, that there is no occasion for this to be explicit, or the profession hereof to be made any otherwise, than as their relation to a church denominates them visible professors: This is only a presumptive evidence that they are so, and does not sufficiently distinguish them from the world, especially from that part of it which makes an outward shew of religion, and attend on several branches of publick worship. This is certainly very remote from the character given of all those churches which we have an account of in the New Testament, concerning some of whom the Apostle says, that *their faith* was not only known to that particular society to which they belonged, but it was *spread abroad*, or *spoken of throughout the whole world*^m. This it could never have been, if they, who were more immediately concerned to know it, had received no other conviction than what is the result of their joining with them in some external acts of worship.

And it may also be infer'd, from what is generally allowed, by those who explain the nature of the Lord's Supper, which is a church-ordinance, and lay down the qualifications of those who are deemed fit to partake of it; particularly, that they are under an obligation to examine themselves, not only concerning their knowledge to discern the Lord's Body; but their faith to feed on him, their repentance, love, and new obedience, trusting in his mercy, and rejoicing in his love; and they assert the necessity of their renewing the exercise of those graces, which may render them meet for this ordinanceⁿ. And this is consonant to the practice of many of the reformed churches, who will not admit any into their communion, without receiving satisfaction, as to their having these qualifications for this ordinance. And, since the matter in controversy with them principally respects the manner in which this is to be given, and the concern of the church herein, we may take occa-

sion to infer, from hence, that there is the highest reason that the church should receive satisfaction, as well as those who preside over it; inasmuch as they are obliged, in conscience, to have communion with them, and reckon them among the number of those who have been made partakers of the grace of Christ, which they cannot well be said to do, unless this be, some way or other, made visible to them; which leads us to consider,

2. The manner in which this profession is to be made visible, namely, whether it is to be done by every one in his own person; or a report hereof by another in his name, may be deemed sufficient. This I can reckon no other than a circumstance; and therefore one of these ways is not so far to be insisted on, as that a person should be denied this privilege, (whose qualifications for it are not to be questioned) because he is unwilling to comply with it, as thinking that the main end designed thereby may be as effectually answered by the other. If a person be duly qualified, as the Apostle says concerning *Timothy*, to *make a good profession before many witnesses*^o; and this may not only have a tendency to answer the end of giving satisfaction to them, but be an expedient, in an uncommon degree, to promote their edification; if he have something remarkable to impart, and desire to bear his testimony to the grace of God, which he has experienced, in his own person, and thereby to induce others to join with him in giving him the glory of it, there is no law of God, or nature, that prohibits, or forbids him to do it; nor ought this to be censured, as though it could not be done, without its being liable to the common imputation, as though pride must be the necessary inducement leading him thereunto; for that is such an instance of censure and reproach, as is unbecoming Christians, especially when it is alledged as an universal exception against it. Nevertheless, I am far from pleading for this, as a necessary term of communion; nor do I think that a person's desire to give the church satisfaction, in such a way, ought always to be complied with; since whatever occasion some may suppose they have for it, all are not fit to do it, in such a way, as may tend to the church's edification. There are various other ways by which a church may know, that those who are proposed to its communion have a right to it, which I forbear to mention;

^m 1 Thess. i. 8. compared with Rom. i. 8.

ⁿ See Quest. CLXXI, CLXXIV.

^o 1 Tim. vi. 12.

The Church's Right to exclude unqualified Members from it. 565

but one of them is not to be so far insisted on, as that a bare refusal to comply with it rather than another, provided the general end be answer'd, should debar a person, otherwise qualified for it, from church-communion. The church being thus satisfied, he is joined to it by their consent, and is hereby laid under equal engagements with them, to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. And this leads us to consider,

2. The exclusion of members from church-communion. This is agreeable to the laws of society, as well as their admission into it; and hereby a becoming zeal is express'd for the glory of God, and a publick testimony given against those who discover the insincerity of their professed subjection to Christ, which was the ground and reason of their being admitted into that relation, which now they appear to have forfeited. This leads us to consider,

(1.) That the church has a right to exclude those from its communion who appear to be unqualified for it, or a reproach to it; under which *Head*, I cannot but take notice of the opinion of the *Eraſtians*, that a church has no power, distinct from the civil government, to exclude persons from its communion. This was advanced by *Eraſtus*, a physician in *Germany*, soon after the beginning of the Reformation; and that, which seems to have given occasion hereunto, was the just prejudice which he entertained against the Popish doctrine, concerning the independency of the church upon the state; which was then, and is at this day, maintained, and abused to such a degree, that if a clergy-man insults the government, and sets himself at the head of a rebellion against his lawful Prince, or is guilty of any other enormous crimes, he flies to the church for protection, and generally finds it there, especially if the King should, in any respect, disoblige them, or refuse to lay his crown at their feet, if they desire it: This, I say, was a just prejudice, which gave the first rise to this opinion, in which, opposing one extremum, the first founder of it ran into another.

The argument, by which it is generally supported, is, that this tends to erect, or set up, one government in another^p: But this is not contrary to the law of nature and nations, when a smaller government is not co-ordinate with the

other, but allowed and protected by it: The government of a family, or corporation, must be acknowledged, by all to be a smaller government included in a greater; but will any one deny that these are inconsistent with it? May not a master admit into, or exclude, whom he pleases from being members of his family? or a corporation make those by-laws, by which it is governed, without being supposed to interfere with the civil government? And, by a parity of reason, may not a church, pursuant not only to the laws of society, but the rule which Christ has given, exclude members from its communion, without being supposed to subvert the fundamental laws of civil government? We do not deny, but that if the church should pretend to inflict corporal punishments on its members, or make use of the civil sword, which is committed into the hand of the magistrate; or if it should act contrary to the laws of Christ, by defending, encouraging, or abetting those who are enemies to the civil government, or excluding them from those privileges, which the laws of the land give them a right to; this would be a notoriously unwarrantable instance of erecting one government in another, subversive of it: But this is not the design of excommunication, as it is one of those ordinances which Christ has given to his church.

(2.) We are now to consider the causes of inflicting this censure on persons; and these are no other than those things which, had they been before known, would have been a bar to their being admitted to church-communion. And therefore when a person is guilty of those crimes, which, had they been known before, he ought not to have been received; when these are made to appear, he is deemed unqualified for that privilege which he was before admitted to partake of; on which account we generally say, that every one first excludes himself, by being guilty of those crimes that disqualify him for church-communion, before he is to be excluded from it, by the sentence of the church. But, that we may be a little more particular on this subject, let us consider,

1st. That they who disturb the tranquility of the church, by the uneasiness of their tempers, or who are not only unwilling to comply with the method of its government; but endeavour to make others so, or who are restless in their attempts to bring innovations into it, or

^p Imperium in imperio.

554 Subjection to CHRIST to be professed; and how made visible.

for granted by many on both sides; and, indeed, without it the church could not be called *visible*, or a society of such as profess the true religion, and, together with it, their subjection to Christ. And this, in a more especial manner, must be made known to them, who are to hold communion with them, as called to be saints; which cannot, from the nature of the thing, be done, unless it be, some way or other, made to appear. If it be said, that there is no occasion for this to be explicit, or the profession hereof to be made any otherwise, than as their relation to a church denominates them visible professors: This is only a presumptive evidence that they are so, and does not sufficiently distinguish them from the world, especially from that part of it which makes an outward shew of religion, and attend on several branches of publick worship. This is certainly very remote from the character given of all those churches which we have an account of in the New Testament, concerning some of whom the Apostle says, that *their faith* was not only known to that particular society to which they belonged, but it was *spread abroad*, or *spoken of throughout the whole world*^m. This it could never have been, if they, who were more immediately concerned to know it, had received no other conviction than what is the result of their joining with them in some external acts of worship.

And it may also be infer'd, from what is generally allowed, by those who explain the nature of the Lord's Supper, which is a church-ordinance, and lay down the qualifications of those who are deemed fit to partake of it; particularly, that they are under an obligation to examine themselves, not only concerning their knowledge to discern the Lord's Body; but their faith to feed on him, their repentance, love, and new obedience, trusting in his mercy, and rejoicing in his love; and they assert the necessity of their renewing the exercise of those graces, which may render them meet for this ordinanceⁿ. And this is consonant to the practice of many of the reformed churches, who will not admit any into their communion, without receiving satisfaction, as to their having these qualifications for this ordinance. And, since the matter in controversy with them principally respects the manner in which this is to be given, and the concern of the church herein, we may take occa-

sion to infer, from hence, that there is the highest reason that the church should receive satisfaction, as well as those who preside over it; inasmuch as they are obliged, in conscience, to have communion with them, and reckon them among the number of those who have been made partakers of the grace of Christ, which they cannot well be said to do, unless this be, some way or other, made visible to them; which leads us to consider,

2. The manner in which this profession is to be made visible, namely, whether it is to be done by every one in his own person; or a report hereof by another in his name, may be deemed sufficient. This I can reckon no other than a circumstance; and therefore one of these ways is not so far to be insisted on, as that a person should be denied this privilege, (whose qualifications for it are not to be questioned) because he is unwilling to comply with it, as thinking that the main end designed thereby may be as effectually answered by the other. If a person be duly qualified, as the Apostle says concerning *Timothy*, to *make a good profession before many witnesses*^o; and this may not only have a tendency to answer the end of giving satisfaction to them, but be an expedient, in an uncommon degree, to promote their edification; if he have something remarkable to impart, and desire to bear his testimony to the grace of God, which he has experienced, in his own person, and thereby to induce others to join with him in giving him the glory of it, there is no law of God, or nature, that prohibits, or forbids him to do it; nor ought this to be censured, as though it could not be done, without its being liable to the common imputation, as though pride must be the necessary inducement leading him thereunto; for that is such an instance of censure and reproach, as is unbecoming Christians, especially when it is alledged as an universal exception against it. Nevertheless, I am far from pleading for this, as a necessary term of communion; nor do I think that a person's desire to give the church satisfaction, in such a way, ought always to be complied with; since whatever occasion some may suppose they have for it, all are not fit to do it, in such a way, as may tend to the church's edification. There are various other ways by which a church may know, that those who are proposed to its communion have a right to it, which I forbear to mention;

^m 1 Thess. i. 8. compared with Rom. i. 8.

ⁿ See Quest. CLXXI, CLXXIV.

^o 1 Tim. vi. 12.

The Church's Right to exclude unqualified Members from it. 565

but one of them is not to be so far insisted on, as that a bare refusal to comply with it rather than another, provided the general end be answer'd, should debar a person, otherwise qualified for it, from church-communion. The church being thus satisfied, he is joined to it by their consent, and is hereby laid under equal engagements with them, to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. And this leads us to consider,

2. The exclusion of members from church-communion. This is agreeable to the laws of society, as well as their admission into it; and hereby a becoming zeal is express'd for the glory of God, and a public testimony given against those who discover the insincerity of their professed subjection to Christ, which was the ground and reason of their being admitted into that relation, which now they appear to have forfeited. This leads us to consider,

(1.) That the church has a right to exclude those from its communion who appear to be unqualified for it, or a reproach to it; under which *Head*, I cannot but take notice of the opinion of the *Erastians*, that a church has no power, distinct from the civil government, to exclude persons from its communion. This was advanced by *Erastus*, a physician in *Germany*, soon after the beginning of the Reformation; and that, which seems to have given occasion hereunto, was the just prejudice which he entertained against the Popish doctrine, concerning the independency of the church upon the state; which was then, and is at this day, maintained, and abused to such a degree, that if a clergy-man insults the government, and sets himself at the head of a rebellion against his lawful Prince, or is guilty of any other enormous crimes, he flies to the church for protection, and generally finds it there, especially if the King should, in any respect, disoblige them, or refuse to lay his crown at their feet, if they desire it: This, I say, was a just prejudice, which gave the first rise to this opinion, in which, opposing one extream, the first founder of it ran into another.

The argument, by which it is generally supported, is, that this tends to erect, or set up, one government in another: But this is not contrary to the law of nature and nations, when a smaller government is not co-ordinate with the

other, but allowed and protected by it: The government of a family, or corporation, must be acknowledged, by all to be a smaller government included in a greater; but will any one deny that these are inconsistent with it? May not a master admit into, or exclude, whom he pleases from being members of his family? or a corporation make those by-laws, by which it is governed, without being supposed to interfere with the civil government? And, by a parity of reason, may not a church, pursuant not only to the laws of society, but the rule which Christ has given, exclude members from its communion, without being supposed to subvert the fundamental laws of civil government? We do not deny, but that if the church should pretend to inflict corporal punishments on its members, or make use of the civil sword, which is committed into the hand of the magistrate; or if it should act contrary to the laws of Christ, by defending, encouraging, or abetting those who are enemies to the civil government, or excluding them from those privileges, which the laws of the land give them a right to; this would be a notoriously unwarrantable instance of erecting one government in another, subversive of it: But this is not the design of excommunication, as it is one of those ordinances which Christ has given to his church.

(2.) We are now to consider the causes of inflicting this censure on persons; and these are no other than those things which, had they been before known, would have been a bar to their being admitted to church-communion. And therefore when a person is guilty of those crimes, which, had they been known before, he ought not to have been received; when these are made to appear, he is deemed unqualified for that privilege which he was before admitted to partake of; on which account we generally say, that every one first excludes himself, by being guilty of those crimes that disqualify him for church-communion, before he is to be excluded from it, by the sentence of the church. But, that we may be a little more particular on this subject, let us consider,

1st. That they who disturb the tranquility of the church, by the uneasiness of their tempers, or who are not only unwilling to comply with the method of its government; but endeavour to make others so, or who are restless in their attempts to bring innovations into it, or

566 *The Causes of Exclusion from Church-Communion.*

propagate doctrines which are contrary to scripture, and the general faith of the church, founded thereon; though these be not directly subversive of the gospel, yet, inasmuch as the persons are not satisfied in retaining their own sentiments, without giving disturbance to others, who cannot adhere to them, such, I think, ought to be separated from the communion of the church, purely out of a principle of self-preservation, though it be not their immediate duty to judge the state, so much as the temper of the persons, whom they withdraw from.

2^{dly}. If a person propagate a doctrine subversive of the gospel, or that faith on which the church is founded, he is to be excluded. It is such an one, as I humbly conceive, whom the Apostle styles an *Heretick*, and advises *Titus to reject him*, and speaks of him as *one that is subverted, and sinneth, being condemn'd of himself*^a. Some think, that the person here spoken of, is one who pretends to believe one doctrine, but really believes another, which is of a most pernicious tendency, and therefore is to be rejected; not for his sentiments, but his insincerity; and, upon this account, he is said to be *self-condemned*^r. But I cannot acquiesce in this sense of the text; for though there may be some in the world who think, to find their account, gain popular applause, or, some way or other, serve their worldly interest, by pretending to believe those doctrines which they really deny; yet this cannot be truly said of the person, whom the Apostle, in this scripture, describes as an *Heretick*: He is, indeed, represented as inconsistent with himself; and this is supposed to be known, and alledged, as an aggravation of the charge on which his expulsion from that religious society, of which he was a member, is founded: but did ever any man propagate one doctrine, and tell the world that he believed another, so that he might, for this, be convicted as an hypocrite? And certainly this could not be known without his own confession, and the church could not censure him for it, but upon sufficient evidence. If it be said, that they might know this by divine inspiration, which, 'tis true, they were favour'd with in that age, in which, among other extraordinary gifts, they had that of *discerning of spirits*; it is greatly to be questioned, whether ever they proceeded against any one upon such extraordinary

intimations, without some apparent matter of accusation, which was known by those who had not this extraordinary gift; for, if they had a liberty to proceed against persons in such a way, why did not our Saviour reject *Judas*, who was one of that society that attended on his ministry, when he knew him to be an hypocrite, or *self-condemn'd*, in a most notorious degree, yet he did not; and the reason, doubtless, was, because he designed that his churches, in succeeding ages, should, in all their judicial proceedings, go upon other evidence, which might easily be known by all, when they expell'd any one from their communion.

Besides, if this be the sense of the text, and the ground on which persons are to be rejected, then no one can be known to be self-condemn'd now; for we have no such extraordinary intimations thereof, since miraculous gifts are ceased: And is there any thing instituted as essential to the church's proceedings, in the methods of their government, which could not be put in practice, except in the apostolick age? and, if so, then having recourse to extraordinary discerning of spirits, as a foundation of this procedure, will not serve the purpose for which 'tis alledged.

It must therefore be concluded, that the person here said to be *self-condemn'd*, was not deem'd so, because he pretended to hold that faith which he really denied; but because his present professed sentiments were the reverse of what he had before pretended to hold, which was a term on which he was admitted into the church; and in this sense he is said to be *self-condemn'd*, as his present errors contain'd a contradiction to that faith which he then profess'd, in common with the rest of that society, of which he was admitted a member.

3^{dly}. Persons are to be excluded from church-communion for immoral practices, which not only contradict their professed subjection to Christ, but argue them to be in an unconverted state. When they were first received into the church, they were supposed, by a judgment of charity, to be Christ's subjects and servants: Their own profession, which was not then contradicted by any apparent blemishes in their conversation, was the foundation of this opinion, which the church was then bound to entertain concerning them; but, when they are guilty of any crimes, which are contrary to their professed sub-

^a Tit. iii. 10, 11. ^r *Autonolaxeis* &c.

The Way of proceeding in excluding from Church-Communion. 567

jection to Christ, the church is to take away the privilege which they had before granted them; for hereby they appear to be disqualified for their communion; and this is necessary, inasmuch as, by it, they express a just detestation of every thing that would be a reproach to them, or an instance of disloyalty to, or rebellion against Christ, their Head and Saviour.

(3.) We are now to speak concerning the method of proceeding in excluding persons from church-communion. We must consider this as a judicial act, and therefore not to be done without trying and judging impartially the merits of the cause. A crime committed is supposed to be first known by particular persons, who are members of the church; or if any injury be done, whereby another has received just matter of offence, he is supposed to be first apprised of it, before it be brought before the church. In this case, our Saviour has expressly given direction concerning the method in which he is to proceed, when he says, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen-man, and a Publican*¹. If this scripture be rightly understood, it will give great light to the method of proceeding in this matter.

And here we must consider, that the crime is called a *Trespass*, and accordingly is, in some respects, injurious to others, whereby the offender contracts some degree of guilt, which he is to be reprov'd for, otherwise there would be no room for a private rebuke, or admonition, in order to bring him to repentance; nor, upon his obstinate refusal thereof, would the church have ground to proceed in excluding him from its communion: Nevertheless, we are not to suppose the crime to be of such a nature, as is, in it self, inconsistent with a state of grace, or affords matter of open scandal to the Christian name; as if a person were guilty of adultery, theft, or some other notorious crime; for, in this case, it would not be sufficient for the person, who is apprised of it, to give him a friendly

and gentle reproof; so that, upon his confessing his fault, and repenting of it, all farther proceedings against him ought to be stop'd; for herein, I humbly conceive, that he that has received information concerning it, ought to make it known to the church, that so the matter might not only be fully charged upon him, but his repentance be as visible, as the scandal he has brought to religion, by his crime, has been. If I know a person to be a traitor to his Prince, a murderer, or guilty of any other crime, whereby he has forfeited his life, 'tis not sufficient for me to reprove him privately for it, in order to bring him to repentance; but I must discover it to proper persons, that he may be brought to condign punishment: So, in this case, if a person be guilty of a crime, that in it self disqualifies for church-communion, and brings a reproach on the ways of God, the church ought to express their publick resentment against it, which will tend to secure the honour of religion; and therefore it ought to be brought before them immediately, and they to proceed against him, by excluding him from their communion; though, for the present, he seem to express some degree of sorrow for his crime, as being made publick; and if they judge that his repentance is sincere, and the world has sufficient ground to conclude it to be so, then they may express their forgiveness thereof, and so withdraw the censure they have pass'd upon him.

But, in crimes of a lesser nature than these, a private admonition ought to be given; and if this be to no purpose, but the person go on in sin, whereby it appears to be habitual, and his repentance not sincere, after this, the cause is to be brought before the church: But, in order hereunto, the person that first reprov'd him, must take one or two more, that they may join in the second reproof; and, if all this be to no purpose, then they are to appear as evidences against him, and the church is to give him a publick admonition; and, if this solemn ordinance prove ineffectual, then he is to be excluded; and his exclusion is stiled his *being to them as an Heathen-man or Publican*, that is, they have no farther relation to him, any more than they have to the *Heathen* or *Publicans*, or no immediate care of him, any other-wise than as they are to desire to know whether this censure be bless'd

¹ Matt. xviii. 15—17.

568 *With what Temper Persons are to be excluded from a Church.*

for his advantage. And this leads us,

(4.) To consider the temper with which this censure ought to be denounced, and the consequences thereof, with respect to him that falls under it. The same frame of spirit ought to discover it self in this, as in all other reproofs, for sin committed, in which there ought to be a zeal express'd for the glory of God, and, at the same time, compassion to the souls of them, who have render'd themselves obnoxious to it, without the least degree of hatred redounding to their persons. The crime is to be aggravated in proportion to the nature thereof, that so he that has committed it may be brought under conviction, and be humbled for his sin, and yet he is to be made sensible that his spiritual advantage is intended thereby.

This is very contrary to those methods which were taken in the corrupt state of the *Jewish* church, who, when they excommunicated persons, denounced several curses against them, and their behaviour consequent thereupon, was altogether unjustifiable. We have an account, in some of their writings, of two degrees of excommunication practised among them, one of which only deprived them of some privileges which that church enjoy'd, but not of all. Another carried in it more terror, by reason of several *Anathemas* annexed to it, which contain'd a great abuse and perversion of the design of that law relating to the curses that were to be denounced on mount *Ebal*, mentioned in *Deut. xxvii.* which was not given as a form, to be used in excommunication, but to shew them what sin deserved, and that this might be an expedient to prevent those sins, which would expose them to the divine wrath and curse. And though they pretend to have a warrant for this from *Deborah*, and *Barak's* cursing *Meroz*^u, or *Joshua's* denouncing a curse upon him that should re-build *Jericho*^x; yet this does not give countenance to their proceedings herein; for we must distinguish between those *Anathemas*, which were denounced by immediate divine direction, by some that

had the spirit of prophecy, and those curses which were denounced by others who were altogether destitute thereof^v.

Moreover, as the *Jews*, in the degenerate ages of that church, abused the ordinance of excommunication, as above-mentioned, so they discover'd such a degree of hatred to those whom they excommunicated, as ought not to be express'd to the vilest of men. An instance of this we have in their behaviour towards the *Samaritans*, who, according to the account we have from *Jewish* writers, were excommunicated in *Ezra's* time, for building a temple on mount *Gerizzim*, and setting up corrupt worship there, in opposition to that which ought to have been performed in the temple at *Jerusalem*. For this they were justly excluded from the *Jewish* church^z; but their morose behaviour towards them was unwarrantable. That there was an irreconcilable enmity between them, appears, from the woman of *Samaria's* answer to our Saviour, when desiring her to give him water; from whence it is evident that he was far from approving of this behaviour of the *Jews* towards them: The woman was amazed, that he should ask water of her, and hereupon says to him, *How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*^a; that is, they retain that old rancour and prejudice against them, that they will not have any dealings with them which contain the least obligation on either side. These things were consequences of excommunication, which they had no ground for in scripture.

As for the Christian church, they seem to have followed the *Jews* too much in that, in which they are not to be imitated. Hence arose the distinction between the greater and the lesser excommunication, which is agreeable, though express'd in other words, to that which was before mentioned; and those *Anathemas*, which were denounced against persons excommunicated by them, how much soever it might have argued their zeal against the crimes they committed;

^v The former of these *Jewish* writers call נידוי *Niddui*; the latter they call חרם *Cherem*, or שחממא *Schammatha*, which was performed with several execrations, by which they, as it were, bound them over to suffer both temporal and eternal punishments. See *Lightfoot's Hora Hebr. & Talmud.* in 1 *Cor. v. 5.*

^u Judges v. 23.

^x Josh. vi. 26.

^y See more on this subject in *Vitringa de Synagog. Res.* Pag. 745. and also the form used, and the instrument drawn up, when a person was excommunicated and anathematiz'd, in *Selden de jure Nat. & Gent.* Lib. IV. cap. 7. and *Buxt. Lex. Talm. in voce CHEREM.*

^z See an account of the manner of their excommunication, and the curse denounced against them at that time, and the first cause of it, taken from *Josephus*, and other *Jewish* writers, in *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. II. Pag. 538—540. and Vol. I. Pag. 599.

^a John iv. 9.

In what Sense these were deliver'd to Satan, and for what End 569

yet it is no example for us to follow. 'Tis beyond dispute, that they endeavour'd to make this censure as much dreaded as was possible, to deter men from committing those crimes that might deserve it. *Tertullian* calls it, *An anticipation of the future judgment*^b; and *Cyprian* supposes such an one to be far from a state of salvation^c.

And some have supposed, that persons, when excommunicated, were possessed by the devil, which they conclude to be the sense of the Apostle^d, when he speaks of delivering such unto Satan^e; and that Satan actually seiz'd, and took possession of them; and that God granted this as an expedient, to strike a terror into the minds of men, to prevent many sins being committed; and that this was more necessary at that time, when they were destitute of the assistance of the civil magistrate, who took no care to defend the church, or to punish those crimes that were committed by its members: But I cannot think that there was ever such a power granted to the church, how much soever the necessity of affairs be supposed to require it. We read nothing of it in the writings of those *Fathers*, who lived in the early ages thereof; such as *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, or *Cyprian*, who would, doubtless, have taken some notice of this extraordinary miraculous punishment attending excommunication, had there been any such thing. Some of them, indeed, speak of the church's being favoured, in some instances, with the extraordinary gift of miracles, and particularly that of casting out devils, after the Apostle's time^f; but we have no account of the devil's possessing any upon their being cast out of the church.

We read, indeed, in scripture, of delivering a person excommunicated to Sa-

tan^g; but I cannot think that the Apostle intends any more by it, than his being declared to be in Satan's kingdom, that is, in the world, where he rules over the children of disobedience; and, if his crime be so great, as is inconsistent with a state of grace, he must, without doubt, be reckon'd a servant of Satan, and, in this sense, be deliver'd to him. And there is a particular end thereof, mentioned by the Apostle, namely, *The destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*; so that the person's good is to be intended by it, that he may be humbled, brought to repentance, and afterwards received again into the bosom of the church.

Thus we have consider'd the general description of a church, the matter and form thereof, and the power granted them of receiving persons into, or excluding them from communion. Now from hence we may infer,

1st. That nearness of habitation, how much soever it may contribute to the answering some ends of church-communion, which cannot be attained by those that live many miles distant from each other, is not sufficient to constitute persons church-members, or to give them a right to the privileges that attend such a relation. *Parochial* churches have no foundation in scripture, for they want both the matter and form of a church; nor are they any other than an human constitution.

2^{dly}. The scripture gives no account of the church, as *National* or *Provincial*; and therefore, though persons have a right to many civil privileges, as born in particular nations, or provinces, it does not follow, from thence, that they are professedly subjects to Christ, or united together in the bonds of the gospel. Therefore if a church, that stiles it self *National*, excludes persons from its com-

^b Vid. *Tert. Apol. cap. 39. Summum futuri judicii prejudicium.*

^c Vid. *Cypr. de Orat. Dom. Timendum est, & orandum, ne dum quis absentus sepeatur à Christi corpore, procul remaneat à salute.*

^d 1 Cor. v. 5.

^e Vid. *Cave's Prim. Christ. Part. III. cap. 5.*

^f *Justin Martyr* tells the Jews, [*Vid. ejusd. Colloq. cum Tryph.*] that the church, in his time, had the gift of prophecy; which *Eusebius* [*in Hist. Eccles. Lib. IV. cap. 17.*] takes notice of, and, doubtless, believed it to be true in fact, though it be very much questioned whether there were any such thing in the *Fourth Century*, in which he lived. *Gregory Nyssen* and *Basil*, who lived a little after *Eusebius*, assert, that there were many miracles wrought in the *Third Century*, by *Gregory of Neo-caesarea*, for which reason he is called *Thaumaturgus*; though 'tis not improbable that they might be imposed on in some things, which they relate concerning him, especially when they compare him with the Apostles, and ancient Prophets, not excepting *Moses* himself in this respect; and, 'tis certain, many things are related, of his miracles, which seem too fabulous to obtain credit; yet there is ground enough, from all that they say, to suppose that he wrought some, and that therefore, in his time, they were not wholly ceased, [*Vid. Greg. Nyss. in vit. Greg. Thaum. and Basil de Sp. Sanct. cap. 29.*] And *Origen* affirms, that, in his time, the Christians had a power to perform many miraculous cures, and to foretell things to come, [*Vid. Lib. I. Contr. Cels. Kai vi. Ichn te ayin enen Pneuma*] ὁ παρὰ χειρὶανὸς οὐδὲν ἐξεδύσει δαίμονας καὶ πολλὰς ἰσχύας ἐπέσει καὶ ὁρῶσι τινα κατὰ το εὐαγγέλιον λόγῳ πρὸς μαλλόν. If this had not been true, *Celsus*, who wanted neither malice, nor a will, to oppose, would certainly have detected the fallacy. And *Tertullian* [*Vid. Apolog. cap. 23.*] appeals to it for the proof of the Christian religion, offering to lay his life and reputation at stake, if the Christians, when publicly calling upon God, did not cure those who were possessed with devils.

^g 1 Cor. v. 5.

munion, whether it be for real or supposed crimes, it takes away that right which it had no power to confer, but what is founded on the laws of men, which are very distinct from those which Christ has given to his churches. And this leads us,

5. To consider the government of the church, by those officers which Christ has appointed therein. Tyranny and Anarchy are extremes, inconsistent with the good of civil society, and contrary to the law of nature, and are sufficiently fenced against by the government which Christ has fixed in his church: He has appointed officers to secure the peace and order thereof, and has limited their power, and given directions that concern the exercise thereof, that so it may be govern'd without oppression, its religious rights maintained, the glory of God, and the mutual edification of its members hereby promoted.

We have already consider'd those extraordinary officers which Christ set over the gospel-church, when it was first constituted, namely, the *Apostles* and *Evangelists*: But, besides these, there are others which he has given to his churches; and these either such as are appointed to bear rule, more especially, in what respects the promoting their faith and order, who are stiled *Pastors* and *Elders*; or others, who have the over-sight of the secular affairs of the church, and the trust of providing for the necessities of the poor committed to them, who are called *Deacons*.

Concerning the former of these, to wit, *Pastors* and *Elders*, we often read of them in the New Testament: Nevertheless, all are not agreed in their sentiments, as to one particular relating hereunto, namely, whether the *Elders*, spoken of in scripture, are distinct officers from *Pastors*? or, whether Christ has appointed two sorts of them, to wit, preaching and ruling *Elders*? Some think the Apostle distinguishes between them, when he says, *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine*^a; the double honour here intended seems to be not only civil respect, but maintenance, as appears from the following words, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the labourer is worthy of his reward*. Now these suppose that this maintenance belongs only to such as labour in word and doctrine, and not to those other *Elders*,

who are said to *rule well*; therefore there are *Elders* that *rule well*, distinct from those that *labour in word and doctrine*.

Others, indeed, think, that the Apostle, in this text, speaks only of the latter sort, and then the stress of his argument is laid principally on the word *Labouring*, *q. d.* Let every one who preaches the gospel, and presides over the church, have that honour confer'd on him that is his due; but let this be greater in proportion to the pains and diligence that he expresses for the church's edification.

Nevertheless, I cannot but think, since it is agreeable to the laws of society, and not in the least repugnant to any thing we read, in scripture, concerning the office of an *Elder*, that, in case of emergency, when the necessity of the church requires it, or when the work of preaching and ruling is too much for a Pastor, the church being very numerous, it is advisable that some should be chosen from among themselves to assist him in managing the affairs of government and performing some branches of his office, distinct from that of preaching, which these are not called to do, as not being duly qualified for it: These are helpers or assistants in government; and their office may have in it a very great expediency; as in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, and the direction and advice of those who are men of prudence and esteem in the church, will be very conducive to maintain its peace and order: but I cannot think that this office is necessary in smaller churches, in which the Pastors need not their assistance. And this leads us to speak concerning the office of a *Pastor*, which consists of two branches, namely, preaching the word, and administering the sacraments on the one hand; and performing the office of a ruling *Elder* on the other.

1st. We may consider him as qualified and called to preach the gospel. This is an honourable and important work, and has always been reckon'd so, by those who have had any concern for the promoting the glory of God in the world. The Apostle Paul was very thankful to Christ that he confer'd this honour upon him, or, as he expresses it, that he counted him faithful, and put him into the ministry^b; and elsewhere he concludes, that it is necessary, that they, who engage in this work, be sent by God, *How shall they preach, except they be sent*^c? This is a necessary pre-requisite to the pastoral office,

^a 1 Tim. v. 17.

^b Chap. i. 12.

^c Rom. x. 15.

as much as speech is necessary to an orator, or conduct to a governour: Nevertheless, a person may be employ'd, in the work of the ministry, who is not a pastor; these may be reckon'd, if they discharge the work they are called to, faithfully, a blessing to the world, and a valuable part of the church's treasure; yet, consider'd as distinct from Pastors, they are not reckon'd among its officers. This is a subject that very well deserves our consideration: But, inasmuch as we have an account elsewhere¹ of the qualifications and call of ministers to preach the gospel, and the manner in which this is to be done, we pass it over at present, and proceed,

^{2dly}, To consider a minister, as invested in the pastoral office, and so related to a particular church. The characters by which such, who are called to it, are described, in the New Testament, besides that of a *Pastor*, are a *Bishop* or *Overseer*, a *Presbyter* or *Elder*, who labours in word and doctrine.

The world, 'tis certain, is very much divided in their sentiments about this matter, some concluding that a *Bishop* is not only distinct from, but superior, both in order and degree, to those who are stiled *Presbyters* or *Elders*; whereas others think, that there is either no difference between them, or, at least, that it is not so great, as that they should be reckon'd distinct officers in a church. The account we have, in scripture, of this matter, seems to be somewhat different from what were the sentiments of the church in following ages. Sometimes we read of several *Bishops* in one church: Thus the Apostle, writing to the church at *Philippi*, directs his Epistle to the *Bishops* and *Deacons*³; and elsewhere he seems to call the same persons *Bishops* and *Elders*, or *Presbyters*; for 'tis said, that he sent to *Ephesus*, and called together the *Elders* of the church⁴; and advises them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over whom the Holy Ghost had made them *Overseers*, or *Bishops*⁵; and, at another time, he charges *Titus* to ordain *Elders*, or *Presbyters*, in every city; and then gives the character of those whom he was to ordain, bidding him take care that they were *blameless*, and had other qualifications, necessary for this office; and, in assigning a reason for this, he adds, *For a Bishop must be*

blameless, &c. where, 'tis plain, the word *Elder* and *Bishop* are indifferently used by him, as respecting the same person. And the Apostle *Peter*⁶ addresses himself to the *Elders* of the churches, to whom he writes, stiling himself an *Elder together with them*⁷: And, besides this, a witness of the sufferings of *Christ*, which was his character, as an Apostle; and he exhorts them to perform the office of *Bishops*, or *Overseers*⁸, as the word, which we render *Taking the oversight*, signifies; from whence 'tis evident, that *Elders* and *Presbyters* had the character of *Bishops*, from the work they were to perform.

Moreover, that venerable assembly, that met at *Jerusalem*, to discuss an important question brought before them by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, is said to consist of the *Apostles* and *Elders*⁹: Now, if *Bishops* had been, not only distinct from, but a superior order to that of *Elders*, they would have been here mentioned as such, and, doubtless, have met together with them; but it seems probable that they are included in the general character of *Elders*. Some think, that the same persons are called *Bishops*, because they had the oversight of their respective churches; and *Elders*, because they were qualified for this work, by that age and experience which they had, for the most part, arrived to; as the word *Elder* signifies not only one that is invested in an office¹⁰, but one who, by reason of his age, and that wisdom that often attends it, is fitted to discharge it¹¹.

We read nothing in scripture of *Diocesan* churches, or *Bishops* over them, how much soever this was pleaded for in many following ages; and they, who maintain this argument, generally have recourse to the writings of the *Fathers*, and church-historians, which, were the proofs, taken from thence, more strong and conclusive than they are, would not be sufficient to support the divine right thereof. I shall not enlarge on this particular branch of the controversy, inasmuch as it has been handled with a great deal of learning and judgment, by many others¹², who refer to the writings of the *Fathers* of the *three first Centuries*, to prove that churches were no larger in those times than one person could have the oversight of, and that these chose their own *Bishops*. Some think, indeed, that there

¹ See vol. II. Quest. CLVIII, CLIX.

³ Phil. i. 1.

⁵ Acts xx. 17.

⁶ Ver. 28.

⁷ 1 Pet. v. 1.

⁹ Συμπρεσβυτέρως.

¹⁰ ἐπισκοπῶντες.

¹¹ Acts xv. 6.

¹² Legatus.

¹³ 1 Tim. v. 1.

¹⁴ See Calderwood. Altar. Damasc. Jameson's Fundamentals of the Hierarchy examined. Forster's Hierarchical Bishops Claim, &c. and Clarkson's no Evidence for Diocesan Churches. And his Diocesan Churches not yet discover'd, &c.

572 Churches, why called Parishes by Ancient Writers.

is ground to conclude, from what we find in the writings of *Ignatius*, *Tertulian*, *Cyprian*, and other *Fathers* in these ages, that there was a superiority of Bishops to Presbyters, at least, in degree, though not in order; and that the Presbyter performed all the branches of that work, that properly belonged to Bishops, only with this difference, that it was done with their leave, or by their order, or in their absence; and there being several Elders in the same church, when a Bishop died, one of those were ready to succeed him in that office.

Some, indeed, speak of the church as *Parochial*, and contra-distinguished from *Diocesan*; but, inasmuch as it does not appear, by their writings, that these *Parochial* churches had no other bond of union, but nearness of habitation, I cannot so readily conclude, that their church-state depended principally on this political circumstance; but rather that Christians thought it most convenient for such to enter into a church-relation, who, by reason of the nearness of their situation to each other, could better perform the duties that were incumbent on them, pursuant hereunto.

But, notwithstanding this, it appears, from several things occasionally mentioned by the *Fathers*, that the church admitted none into its communion, but those whom they judged qualified for it, and that not only by understanding the doctrines of Christianity, but by a conversation becoming their profession thereof; and it was a considerable time that they remained in a state of probation, being admitted to attend on the prayers and instructions of the church, but order'd to withdraw before the Lord's Supper was administer'd: These are sometimes called *Hearers*, by *Cyprian*; at other times, *Candidates*, but most commonly *Catechumens*. And there were persons appointed not only to instruct them, but to examine what proficiency they made in religion, in order to their being received into the church. In this state of trial they continued generally two or three years; such care they took that persons might not deceive themselves; and the church, by joining in communion with it, without having those quali-

fications that are necessary thereunto. This is very different from *Parochial* churches, as understood and defended by many in our day. Therefore when churches were call'd *Parishes*, in the *three first Centuries*, it was only a circumstantial description thereof.

In every one of these churches there was one who was called a *Bishop*, or Overseer, with a convenient number of Elders, or *Presbyters*; and it is observed, by that learned writer but now refer'd to, that these churches, at first, were comparatively small, and not exceeding the bigness of the city, or village, in which they were situate, each of which was under the care, or oversight, of its respective Pastor, or Bishop.

This was the state of the church, more especially, in the *three first Centuries*: But, if we descend a little lower to the *Fourth Century*, we shall find that the government thereof was very much alter'd, when it arrived to a peaceable and flourishing state; then, indeed, the Bishops had the oversight of larger diocesses, than they had before, which proceeded from the aspiring temper of particular persons^a, who were not content till they had added some neighbouring parishes to their own, and so their churches became very large, till they extended themselves over whole provinces. But even this was complain'd of by some, as an abuse; which occasioned *Chrysostom* so frequently to insist on the inconvenience of Bishops having churches too large for them to take the oversight of, and not so much regarding the qualifications as the number of those over whom they presided; and he signifies his earnest desire, that those under his care might rather excel in piety, than in number, as it would be an expedient for his better discharging the work committed to him^a.

Thus concerning the character and distinction of the Pastors of churches, together with the form of the church in the first ages of Christianity; and what is observed, by many, concerning the agreement and difference which there was between Bishops and Presbyters: But this has been so largely insisted on, by many who have written on both sides the question, and the controversy turning very

^a See *Clarkson's Primitive Episcopacy*, Chap. 7. in which he observes, that it was decreed, by some councils, that they should continue in this state of probation, at least, two or three years; and that *Augustin* continued so long a Catechumen, as appears from the account that *Father* gives of his age, when converted to Christianity, and afterwards received into the church by *Ambrose*.

^a See *Primitive Episcopacy*, Pag. 189—197.

^a See *Clarkson's Primitive Episcopacy*, Chap. 8. in which he refers to several places in the writings of that excellent *Father* to the same purpose.

Bishops and Elders the same. Pastors chosen by Churches. 573

much on critical remarks made on some occasional passages, taken out of the writings of the *Fathers*, without recourse to scripture; it is therefore less necessary, or agreeable to our present design, to enlarge on that *Head*: However, we may observe, that some of those, who have written in defence of *Diocesan* Episcopacy, have been forced to acknowledge, that *Jerom*, *Augustin*, *Ambrose*, *Chrysostom*, in the *Fourth Century*; and, in some following ages, *Sedulius*, *Primatius*, *Theodoret*, and *Theophylact*, have all held the identity of both name and order of Bishops and Presbyters in the primitive church^b. *Jerom*, in particular, is more express on this subject than any of them; and proves it from some arguments taken from scripture, which speak of the distinction that there was between them, as being the result of those divisions, by which the peace and order of the church was broken, and that it was no other than an human constitution^c. This opinion of *Jerom* is largely defended by a learned writer^d, who shews that it is agreeable to the sentiments of other *Fathers*, who lived before and after him. Thus concerning a Pastor, as stiled a *Bishop* or *Presbyter*, we shall now consider him as invested in his office, whereby he becomes related to a particular church of Christ. That no one is Pastor of the Catholick church, has been observed, under a foregoing *Head*^e; wherein we shewed, that the church, when stiled Catholick, is not to be reckoned the seat of government; and therefore we must consider a Pastor as presiding over a particular church; and, in order hereunto, it is necessary that he should be called, or chosen, to take the oversight of it, on their part, and comply with the invitation on his own, and, after that, be solemnly invested in, or set apart, to this office.

(1.) We are to consider what more especially respects the church, who have a right to choose, or call, those, who are

qualified for the work, to engage in this service, and to perform the two branches of the pastoral office, namely, instructing and governing. This is not only agreeable to the laws of society, but is plainly contained in scripture, and appears to have been the sentiment and practice of the church, in the *three first Centuries* thereof. The church's power of choosing their own officers, is sufficiently evident from scripture. If there were any exception hereunto, it must be in those instances in which there was an extraordinary hand of providence in the appointment of officers over them; but, even then, God sometimes refer'd the matter to their own choice: Thus, when *Moses* made several persons rulers over *Israel*, to bear a part of the burthen, which before was wholly laid on him, he refers this to their own election, when he says, *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you*^f: And in the gospel-church, which, at first, consisted of *about an hundred and twenty members*^g, when an Apostle was to be chosen to succeed *Judas*, they appointed two out of their number, and prayed, that God would signify which of them he had chosen; and, when they had given forth their lots, the lot fell upon *Matthias*, and he was number'd with the eleven Apostles^h, so we render the words: But, if they had been tender'd, he was number'd among the eleven Apostles, by common suffrage, or vote, it would have been more expressive of the sense thereofⁱ. Soon after this, we read of the choice of other officers, to wit, *Deacons* in the church^k, and the Apostles say to them, *Look ye out among you seven men, whom we may appoint over this business*. And afterwards, in their appointing Elders, or Pastors, over particular churches, we read of their choosing them by vote or suffrage: Thus it is said, in *Acts* xiv. 23. *When they had ordained them Elders in every church*; so we translate the

^b See *Stillington* Iren. Pag. 276.

^c Vid. *Hieron.* in *Tyt.* i. 5. Sicut ergo Presbyteri sciunt se ex Ecclesie consuetudine, ei qui sibi prepositus fuerit esse subiectos, ita Episcopi noverint se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis dominice veritate, Presbyteris esse majores, & in commune debere Ecclesiam regere.

^d Vid. *Blondel.* Apol. pro. Sent. *Hieron.*

^e See Pag. 553. Some, indeed, choose to say, that persons that stand more immediately related to their respective churches, are Pastors in the Catholick church, though not of it; which, if the words be rightly understood, does not militate against what we assert.

^f Deut. i. 13.

^g Acts i. 15.

^h Ver. 23.

ⁱ Συγκατεψηφισθη μετὰ ὧν ἑνδεκα ἀποστόλων, which *Beza* renders, *Communibus calculis allectus est cum undecim Apostolis.*

^k Chap. vi. 3.

374 Of Ordination, or setting apart to the Pastoral Office.

words; but they might be better rendered, *When they had chosen Elders in every church by lifting up of the hand.* This was, and is, at this day, a common mode of electing persons, either to civil or religious offices. And it might be easily proved, from the *Fathers*, that this was the universal practice of the church in the *three first Centuries*, and not wholly laid aside in following ages, till civil policy, and secular interest, usurp'd and invaded the rights thereof. But this argument having been judiciously manag'd by Dr. Owen^m, I pass it over, and proceed to consider,

(2.) That a Pastor being thus chosen, by the church, and having confirmed his election by his own consent; then follows his being separated, or publicly set apart to this office, with fasting and prayer, which is generally called *Ordination*. This does not, indeed, constitute a person a Pastor of a church, so that his election, confirmed by his consent, would not have been valid without it; yet it is not only agreeable to the scripture-rule, but highly expedient, that, as his ministerial acts are to be publick, his first entering into his office should be so likewise; and, in order thereunto, that other Pastors, or Elders, should join in this solemnity; for, though they do not confer this office upon him, yet thereby they testify their approbation of the person chosen to it; and a foundation is laid for that harmony of Pastors and churches, that tends to the glory of God, and the promoting of the common interest. This also fences against several inconveniences which might ensue; since it is possible that a church may choose a person to be their Pastor, whose call to, and qualification for this office, may be questioned; and it is natural to suppose, that they would expect that their proceedings herein should be justified and defended by other Pastors and churches, and the communion of churches maintained: But how can this be done, if no expedient be used to render this matter publick and visible, which this way of ordaining, or setting apart to the pastoral office does? And they who join

herein testify their approbation thereof, as what is agreeable to the rule of the gospel.

This publick inauguration, or investiture in the pastoral office, is, for the most part, performed with imposition of hands, which, because it is so frequently mentioned in scripture, and appears to have been practised by the church in all succeeding ages, it will be reckoned, by many, to be no other than a fruitless attempt, if not an offending against the generation of God's people, to call in question the warrantableness thereof. It is certain, this ceremony was used in the early ages of the church, particularly in publick and solemn benedictions: Thus *Jacob* laid his hands on *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, when he blessed them; and also in conferring political officesⁿ. It was also used in healing diseases in a miraculous way^o; and it was sometimes used when persons were eminently converted to the Christian faith and baptized^p. These things are very evident from scripture: Nevertheless, it may be observed, that, in several of these instances, it is, and has, for some ages past, been laid aside, by reason of the discontinuance of those extraordinary gifts, which were signified thereby. There was, doubtless, something extraordinary in the patriarchal benediction; as *Jacob* did not only pray for a blessing on the sons of *Joseph*, but, as a prophet, he foretold that the divine blessing, which he spake of, should descend on their posterity; and therefore we don't read of this ceremony's being used in the more common instances, when persons, who were not endowed with the spirit of prophecy, put up prayers or supplications to God for others. And tho' it was sometimes used, as in the instances before-mention'd, in the designation of persons to political offices; yet it was in those times in which the church of the *Jews* was under the divine theocracy, and extraordinary gifts were expected to qualify them for the office they were called to perform.

And whereas we frequently read, in

^l *ἡ ἐκλογή αὐτοῖς προσεβλήθη κατ' ἐκκλησίαν*, Cum ipsi per suffragia creassent per singulas ecclesias presbyteros. The learned Dr. Owen, in his *True Nature of a Gospel-church*, &c. Pag. 68—71. proves, that the word *ἐκλογή*, in several Greek writers, is used to signify the choice of a person to office by suffrage, or vote, which was done by lifting up the hand. And he observes, that all our old English translations render the words, in this text, ordaining or creating Elders by the suffrage of the disciples. And he farther observes, that the word is but once more used in the New Testament, viz. in 2 Cor. viii. 19. where it is rendered, he was chosen, &c. See more to this purpose in the place but now mentioned.

^m See the *True Nature of a Gospel-church*, Pag. 78—83. where it appears, from *Ignatius*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, and *Cyprian*, that this was practised in the *three first Centuries*, and from *Blondel's Apology*, which he refers to, that it was continued in some following ages.

ⁿ Numb. xxvii. 18. Deut. xxxiv. 9.

^o 2 Kings v. 11. Mark vii. 32.

^p Acts ix. 17.

scripture, of imposition of hands, in the ordination, or setting apart of ministers to the pastoral office, while extraordinary gifts were confer'd, and of these gifts being also bestowed on persons who were converted to the Christian faith, and baptized; in these, and other instances of the like nature, this ceremony was used, as a significant sign and ordinance for their faith: But it is certain, that the conferring extraordinary gifts to qualify for the pastoral office, is not now to be expected; therefore it must either be proved, that, besides this, something else was signified, which may be now expected, or else the use thereof, as a significant sign, or an ordinance for our faith, cannot be well defended. And if it be said, that the conferring this office is signified thereby, it must be proved, that they, who use the sign, have a right to confer the office, or to constitute a person a Pastor of a particular church. If these things cannot easily be proved, then we must suppose that the external action is used, without having in it the nature of a sign, and then it is to be included among those things that are indifferent; and a person's right to exercise the pastoral office, does not depend on the use; nor, on the other hand, is it to be called in question, by reason of the neglect thereof. But, to conclude this *Head*, if the only thing intended hereby be what *Augustin* understood to be the meaning of imposition of hands, on those who were baptized in his day, namely, that it was nothing else but a praying over persons^a, I have nothing to object against it: But if more be intended hereby, and especially if it be reckoned so necessary to the pastoral office, that it cannot be acceptably perform'd without it; this may give just reason for many to except against it.

(3.) We shall now consider the Pastor, as discharging his office. This more immediately respects the church to which he stands related, especially in what concerns that branch thereof, which consists in presiding or ruling over them. If there be more Elders join'd with him, with whom he is to act in concert, this is generally called a *Consistory*, which I cannot think essential to the exercise of that government, which Christ has appointed; though sometimes it may be expedient, as was before observed: but whether there be one, or more, that bear rule in

the church, their power is subjected to certain limitations, agreeable to the laws of society, and those in particular which Christ has given to his church. As the nature of the office we are speaking of, does not argue that the church is without any government, or under such a democracy as infers confusion, or supposes that every one has a right to give laws to the whole body; so it has not those ingredients of absolute and unlimited monarchy or aristocracy, as are inconsistent with liberty; and therefore we suppose, that a Pastor, and other Elders, if such be join'd with him, are not to rule according to their own will, or to act separately from the church in the affairs of government, but in their name, and with their consent; and therefore they are generally stiled, the instruments by which the church exerts that power which Christ has given it; and accordingly a church, when officers are set over it, is said to be organized. This is called, in scripture, the power of the keys, which, agreeably to the laws of society, is originally in them, and is to be exercised in their name, and with their consent, by their officers; and therefore a Pastor, or other Elders with him, have no power to act without the consent of the church, in receiving members into, or excluding them from its communion. This I cannot but think to be agreeable to the law of nature, on which the laws of society are founded, as well as the gospel-rule.

I am sensible that many of the reformed churches, who allow that this power is originally in them, conclude notwithstanding, and their practice is consonant hereunto, that it may be consigned over to the Pastor and Elders, and that this is actually done by them when they chuse them into that office. The principal argument, by which this is generally defended, is, that because they are fit to teach, they are fit to govern, without being directed in any thing that relates thereunto. But the question is not concerning the fitness of persons for it, which is not to be denied, but whether the church ought to divest it self of that power which Christ has given it, especially when it may be exerted without anarchy or confusion; which it certainly may, if this power be not abused, or the due exercise thereof neglected. And, in order hereunto, a church-officer

^a Vid. Aug. de Bapt. contr. Donat. Lib. III. cap. 6. Quid est aliud manus impositio quam oratio super hominem?

is to prepare matters for the church, that nothing trifling, vain, or contentious may be brought before them; and to communicate them to it, to desire to know their sentiments about them, and to declare, improve, and act pursuant thereunto.

There are, indeed, some branches of the pastoral office, which are to be performed without their immediate direction; such as preaching the word, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, endeavouring to satisfy them that are under doubts, or scruples of conscience, and excite and encourage them to perform those duties, which their professed subjection to Christ, and their relation to his church, oblige them to.

(4.) We shall now consider Pastors, or Elders of churches, as employ'd occasionally in using their best endeavours to assist others in some difficulties, in which their direction is needed or desired. This is what we call a *Synod*, which word is very much disrelish'd by some in our age; and it were to be wish'd, that there had been no occasion for this prejudice, from the account we have of the abuses practised by synods and councils in former ages. This gave great uneasiness to *Gregory Nazianzen*, who complains of confusions, and want of temper, which were too notorious in some synods in the age in which he lived. And afterwards we find, that almost all the corruptions that were brought into the church, were countenanced by some synod or other; and many of them assumed to themselves a power of making laws, which were to be received with equal obligation, as though they had been delivered by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and a door was opened by them to persecution, so that they have, in many instances, taken away not only the religious, but civil rights of mankind. It will therefore be thought strange that I should so much as mention the word; but, though I equally detest every thing of this nature, that has been practised by them; yet it is not impossible to treat on this subject in an unexceptionable manner: It is certainly a warrantable practice, founded in the law of nature, for persons who cannot compromise a matter in debate, to desire the advice of others. The same is, doubtless, true in religious matters; therefore we suppose that there may be some matters debated

in a church, which cannot be issued among themselves. And, in this case, provided it be an affair of importance, it is expedient for them to apply themselves to other churches, to give their advice in this matter by their Pastors and Elders: If it be some corruption in doctrine that has insinuated it self into it, they may desire to know the sense of others about it, still reserving to themselves a judgment of discretion, without reckoning their decrees infallible; or if it be in matters of conduct, which, thro' the perverseness of some, and ignorance of others, may be of pernicious tendency, if suitable advice be not given; then it ought to be desired and complied with, so far as it appears to be agreeable to the mind of Christ. This is therefore not only allowable, but very expedient.

I have nothing to say as to the number of persons, to whom this matter may be refer'd: A multitude of counsellors may sometimes be mistaken, when a smaller number have given better advice; neither have I any thing to alledge in defence of *Oecumenical* councils, much less such as have been convened by the usurp'd power of the *Bishop of Rome*. But we are speaking of a particular church under some difficulties, desiring the advice of as many as they think meet to refer the matter to; or if a *Christian Magistrate* demands the advice of the Pastors or Elders of churches, in his dominions, in those religious affairs that are subservient to his government, they ought to obey him. These things are altogether unexceptionable: But when ministers give vent to their own passions, and pretend to give a sanction to doctrines that are unscriptural; or if they annex *Anathemas* to their decrees, or enforce them by excommunication, or put the civil magistrate on methods of persecution; this is a going beyond the rule, and offering prejudice, rather than doing service to the interest of Christ: But when they only signify what is their judgment about some important articles of faith, or church-discipline, or some intricate cases of conscience, in which it is desired; and endeavour to give conviction rather by arguments, than barely their authority, this is not only their duty, but an advantage to the church, as the synod that met at *Jerusalem* was to the church at *Antioch*.

Thus we have consider'd the office of a Pastor. It might be expected that we should consider that of a *Teacher*, which

* Vid. *Greg. Naz. Epist. 42, ad Procop.*

† Acts xv. 31—33.

A Teacher; whether a distinct Officer from a Pastor. 577

many think to be a distinct officer in the church, as the Apostle says, *He gave some Pastors and Teachers*¹. There are many, who treat on this matter, that suppose a *Teacher* to be a distinct officer from a *Pastor*; but yet when they call him a *Teaching Elder*, and allow him to have a part of the government of the church, as well as to be employ'd in the work of preaching, their method of explaining the nature of this office supposes it to differ little or nothing from that of a *Pastor*, except in name. If they say that the difference consists in that the *Pastor* is superior, in honour and degree, to a *Teacher*, and make the latter no more than a provisionary officer in the church, appointed to perform what properly belongs to the *Pastor*, when he is absent, or indisposed, or, for any other reason, desires him to officiate for him: I cannot see reason to conclude that this is the meaning of the word *Teacher*, as mentioned by the Apostle; so that whilst they plead for its being a distinct office in the church, and, at the same time, explain it in such a way, there seems to be little else but a distinction without a difference.

As for the opinion of those who think that it was, indeed, a distinct office, but that a *Teacher* was called, by the church, to some other branches of teaching, which the *Pastor* could not well attend to, and that these were such as were stiled, by the primitive church, *Catechists*: This deserves our consideration. We read, in the early ages of the church, of persons who had this office and character: Their work was such as needed those gifts, which our blessed Saviour was pleased to bestow on men, for the propagating his interest in the world, as much as any other; for, whether they preach'd publickly or no, as the *Pastor* was called to do, their business was not only to instruct the *Catechumens*, who were disposed to embrace the Christian doctrine, but all who were willing to be taught by them; for which end there were publick schools erected, which were under the direction, care, and countenance of the church, in

which the method of instruction was, by explaining the scriptures, and in publick and set disputations, defending the Christian religion against those who opposed it, by which means many were converted to the Christian faith from among the Heathen; and others, who were initiated therein, were, by this means, as well as by publick preaching, established and confirmed therein, and thereby qualified for church-communion, and then baptiz'd and join'd to the church. Thus we read, in the writings of the *Fathers*, and *Church Historians*, of several who performed this office with very great reputation and usefulness²; and it is thought, by some, to have been not only agreeable to the practice of the church in the Apostle's days, but derived from it; and though it be not so plainly mentioned in scripture, as some other offices are, yet that the Apostle refers to it, when he says, *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth*³, that is, *Let him that is catechized communicate to the Catechist*⁴. But this is, at best, but a probable sense of the word, and therefore not sufficient of it self to give ground to conclude, that the Apostle intends this when he speaks of *Teachers*, as distinct officers from *Pastors*. However, though, doubtless, the practice of the church, as above-mentioned, in appointing such officers, was commendable; yet it does not fully appear that this is what the Apostle intends, though I will not deny it to be a probable conjecture; and I should acquiesce in it, rather than in any other sense of the text that I have hitherto met with, did I not think that the words *Pastors and Teachers* might not be as well, if not better, understood, as signifying one and the same office; and therefore I had rather understand them as *Jerom* and *Augustin* do⁵, *q. d. He gave some Pastors*, to wit, *Teachers*, or *Pastors* that are *Teachers*, or engaged in preaching the gospel, which is the principal branch of their office. And that which gives me farther ground to understand the words in this

¹ Eph. iv. 11.

² Near the latter end of the Second Century, *Pantenus* was a celebrated *Catechist*, in the school supported by the church at *Alexandria*; and *Clement Alexandrinus* was first his scholar, and afterwards succeeded him in the work of a *Teacher*; and *Origen* was *Clement's* scholar, and was afterwards employ'd in the same work in that school. And, in the Fourth Century, *Arbansius*, who strenuously defended the faith, in the council of *Nice*, against *Arius*, had his education in the same school; and *Didymus*, who flourished about the middle of that Century, was a *Catechist* therein, and *Jerom* and *Ruffinus* were his scholars.

³ Gal. vi. 6.

⁴ So the vulgar Latin translation renders the word *Kατηχηστής*, *Ei qui se Catechizat*.

⁵ Vid. *Hieron.* in *Ephes.* iv. 11. Non ait alios Pastores, & alios magistros; sed alios Pastores, & magistros, ut qui Pastor est, esse debeat & magister; nec in Ecclesiis Pastoris sibi nomen assumere, nisi posset docere quos pascit & *Aug.* *Epist.* 39. Pastores & Doctores eisdem puto esse, ut non alios Pastores, alios Doctores intelligamus, sed ideo cum prædixisset Pastores subjunxisse Doctores ut intelligerent Pastores ad officium suum pertinere doctrinam.

sense, is, because the Apostle, when he enumerates the officers of a church elsewhere, speaks of Teachers without any mention of Pastors, as it is said, *God has set some in the church; first, Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers*^a; where no mention is made of Pastors, as being included in the word *Teachers*; and this is agreeable to what we observed elsewhere^b, which is all we shall add on this Head.

The next officer in a church is a *Deacon*, whose work and business is described as *serving tables*^c, that is, the Lord's Table, by providing what is necessary for the Lord's Supper, and assisting in the distribution of the elements. He is also to supply the poor with necessaries, and to take care that the minister may be maintained, and other expences defray'd; and, in order hereunto, he is to receive the contributions raised by the church for those ends; so that the office is properly secular, though necessary and useful, as subservient to others that are of a spiritual nature. The Apostle gives an account of the qualifications of those who are to engage in this office^d, in which he speaks of them as persons of an unblemish'd character, of great gravity and sobriety, and other endowments, which may render them faithful in the discharge of their trust, and exemplary and useful in their station.

In the first age of the church, after the Apostles days, when it was under persecution, it was the Deacon's work to visit and give necessary relief to the martyrs and confessors: But we don't find that they performed any other branches of service besides this, and those above-mentioned; though *Tertullian* speaks of them, in his time, as being permitted to baptize in the absence of Bishops and Presbyters^e, in which they went beyond the scripture-rule, and, after this, they preach'd; and this practice has been defended by all who plead for Diocesan Episcopacy, unto this day. But the arguments they bring for it, from scripture, are not sufficiently conclusive, when they say, that *Stephen* and *Philip*, who were the first Deacons, preach'd; for this they did as Evangelists, not as Deacons; and when it is said, they ought to *be apt to teach*^f, the meaning is, that they must

be fit to edify those, by their instructions, whom they relieved, by giving them a part of the church's contributions, that, by their conversation, they may do good to their souls, as well as, by what they give them, to their bodies. And when 'tis farther said, that *they who have used the office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith*^g, this does not sufficiently prove, as many ancient and modern writers suppose, that this qualifies them for the office of Presbyters, since there is no affinity between these two offices; and one cannot, properly speaking, be a qualification for the other: But the *good degree* is, probably, to be understood of their having great honour in the church, as persons eminently useful to it; and *great boldness in the faith*, is not boldness in preaching the gospel, but resolution and steadfastness in adhering to the faith, and, in their proper station, defending, and being ready, when called to it, to suffer for it. Thus we have consider'd the government of the church, and the officers which Christ has appointed in it.

6. The last thing to be consider'd, is the privileges of the visible church, particularly as the members thereof are said to be under God's special care and government, and, as the consequence hereof, have safe protection and preservation, whatever opposition they may meet with from their enemies; and they also enjoy communion of saints, and the ordinary means of salvation.

(1.) We shall consider the church, as under the care of Christ. This is the result of his propriety in them, and his having undertaken to do all things for them, as Mediator, that are necessary to their salvation. This care, extended towards them, is called special, and so differs from, and contains in it many privileges, distinct from, and superior to that which is express'd in the methods of his common providence in the world. There are several metaphorical expressions used, in scripture, to denote Christ's care of, and the particular relation he stands in to his church: Thus he is described as their *Shepherd*, performing those things for them that such a relation imports^h, namely, his giving them, in a spiritual sense, rest and safety, gathering, leading,

^a 1 Cor. xii. 28.

^b The Particle *καὶ* seems to be expletive, and ought to be render'd *even*. See the Note in Pag. 147. The words are *καὶ ὡς τὸν ποιμένα καὶ διδάσκαλον*.

^c Acts vi. 2.

Presbyteri & Diaconi.

Jer. xxxi. 10.

^d 1 Tim. iii. 1—11.

^e 1 Tim. iii. 2.

^f Vid. *Tertull.* de Bapt. Baptizandi habet jus Episcopus, doctrinam

Ver. 13.

^g Psal. xxiii. 1, 2. and lxxx. 1. Isai. xl. 11.

The Church under CHRIST'S special Care and Government. 579

and defending them; and as such he does more for his people, than the shepherd who, being faithful to his trust, hazards his life; for Christ is expressly said to *give his life for his sheep*^a.

Moreover, his care of his church is set forth, by his standing in the relation of a *Father* to them; which argues his tender and compassionate concern for their welfare, as well as safety^k. Now the care of Christ, extended to his church, consists,

1st. In his separating them from, and, as it were, gathering them out of the world, or that part of it that *lieth in wickedness*, as the Apostle says, *The whole world lieth in wickedness*^l; or, as the word may be render'd, in the wicked one; upon which account it is called, Satan's kingdom. He gives them restraining grace, brings them under conviction of sin, and humbles them for it; and, by the preaching of the gospel, not only informs them of the way of salvation, but brings them into it.

2^{dly}. By raising up, and spiriting some amongst them for extraordinary service and usefulness in their station, adorning them with those graces, whereby their conversation is exemplary, and they made to shine as lights in the world; and not only in some particular instances, but by a constant succession, filling up the places of those who are removed to a better world, with others, who are added to the church daily, such as shall be saved.

3^{dly}. His care is farther extended, by fatherly correction, to prevent their ruin and apostacy, which, as the Apostle says, is an instance of his *love* to them^m, and also of his keeping them from, and *in the hour of temptation*ⁿ, and *bruising Satan under their feet*^o, and in supporting them under, and fortifying them against the many difficulties, reproaches, and persecutions, they are exposed to in this world, as *Moses* says, in the blessing of *Asa*, *As thy days, so shall thy strength be; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*^p.

(2.) The visible church is under Christ's special government. It is a part of his glory, as Mediator, that he is the supreme Head and Lord thereof; and this cannot but redound to the advantage of his subjects, as these we are speaking of are said to be, who profess subjection to him, which is not only their duty, but

their peculiar glory; as they are thereby distinguished from the world, and entitled to his special regard. He is their King; and accordingly,

1st. He gives them laws, by which they are visibly govern'd, so that they are not destitute of a rule of government, any more than of a rule of faith, whereby their peace, order, edification, and salvation, are promoted, and all the advantages, which they receive from the wisdom and conduct of Pastors, or other officers, whom he has appointed to go in and out before them, *to feed them with knowledge and understanding*^q, *to watch for their souls*^r, are all Christ's gifts, and therefore privileges which the church enjoys, as under his government.

2^{dly}. He protects and preserves them, notwithstanding the opposition of all their enemies; so that whatever attempts have been hitherto made to extirpate or ruin them, have been ineffectual. The church has weather'd many a tempest, and had safety, as well as various marks of the divine honour and favour, under all the persecutions, which it has been exposed to; so that, according to our Saviour's prediction, *The gates of hell have not prevailed against it*^s; and all these afflictive dispensations of providence are over-ruled for the promoting his own glory, and their spiritual advantage.

(3.) Another privilege, which the church enjoys, is communion of saints. Communion is the consequence of union; and therefore since they are united together, as visible saints, they enjoy that communion, which is the result thereof. The Apostle speaks of a twofold fellowship which the church enjoys, their attaining whereof he reckoned the great end and design of his ministry, when he says, *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*^t. The former of these is included in church-communion; the latter is an honour which God is pleas'd sometimes to confer on those who are brought into this relation: 'Tis what all are to hope for, though none but they, who are Christ's subjects by faith, are made partakers of it. However, the communion of saints is, in it self, a great privilege, inasmuch as that common profession, which they make of subjection to Christ, and the

^a John x. 11.

^b Heb. xiii. 17.

^c Rev. iii. 10.

^d Deut. xxxii. 7.

^e Matt. xvi. 18.

^f Psal. ciii. 13.

^g Rom. xvi. 27.

^h Isa. lxiii. 16.

ⁱ 1 John i. 3.

^j Jer. xxxi. 9.

^k Deut. xxxiii. 25, 27.

^l 1 John v. 19.

^m Heb.

ⁿ Jer. iii. 15.

580 *The Church enjoys Communion of Saints and Means of Grace.*

hope of the gospel, which they are favoured with, is a strong motive and inducement to holiness.

And it is not the smallest part of the advantage, which arises from hence, that they are interested in the prayers of all the faithful that are daily put up to God for those blessings on all his churches, which may tend to their edification and salvation.

And as to what concerns the members of particular churches, who have communion with one another; there is a great advantage arising from mutual conversation about divine things, and the endeavours which they are obliged to use *to build up themselves in their holy faith*^x, and *to consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, but exhorting one another*^y; and also the obligations they are under to *bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*^z, and to express that sympathy and compassion to each other, under the various afflictions and trials which they are exposed to.

And to this we may add another privilege which they are made partakers of, in that they have communion with one another in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which they hope for and enjoy communion with him, whose death is shewed forth therein, and the benefits thereof applied to them that believe.

(4.) The church is farther said to enjoy the ordinary means of salvation, and the offers of grace to all the members thereof in the ministry of the gospel, by which we are to understand the word preached and prayer. These are called the ordinary means of salvation, as distinguished from the powerful influences of the Spirit, which are the internal and efficacious means of grace, producing such effects, as infer the right which such have to eternal life. These ordinary means of grace the church is said to partake of: It is for their sake that the gospel is continued to be preached, and a publick testimony to the truth thereof is given by them to the world; and, in the preaching thereof, Christ is offered to sinners, and, pursuant thereunto, grace given, whereby the church is increased, and built up by those who are taken out of the world, as God makes these ordinances effectual to answer that end: The duty of waiting on him therein is ours, the success thereof is entirely owing to the divine blessing attending it. These are the privileges that the visible church enjoys.

We might have proceeded to consider those which the members of the invisible church are made partakers of, namely, union and communion with Christ in grace and glory; but these are particularly insisted on in some following *Answers*.

^x Jude, Ver. 20.

^y Heb. x. 24, 25.

^z Gal. vi. 2.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.

7 DE 61





A

T A B L E

O F

C O N T E N T S

QUEST. I. Of glorifying God, and the enjoyment of him.

WITH what distinction the glorifying and enjoyment of God may both be said to be man's chief and highest end Pag. 3
 What it is to glorify God
 How God glorifies himself
 How creatures glorify him ib.
 What it is to enjoy God 4
 The connection between glorifying God and the enjoyment of him 6
 Contentedness to perish, that God may be glorified, unjustly made a mark of grace ib.
 To be quickned to duty by a respect to the heavenly glory, no sign of a mercenary spirit ib.

QUEST. II. Of the Being of a God.

REasons why we should be able to prove this by arguments 7
 The Being of a God may be evinced,
 From the light of nature
 What meant thereby
 How it proves the Being of a God ib.
 From the works of creation 8
 from creatures below man 9
 from the structure of man's body ib.
 from the nature of his soul 10
 from the nature and office of conscience 11
 from the boundless desires of the soul 12
 From the consent of all nations ib.
 Objection, That there have been some speculative Atheists, answered ib.
 The belief of a God took not its rise from human policy 13
 It was not propagated merely by tradition 14
 From the works of providence ib.
 From the foretelling future events 15

From the provision made for all Pag. 15
 Particularly for man's safety 16
 The objection taken from the prosperity of the wicked, answered ib.
 Nothing short of revelation sufficient to give a saving discovery of God 17

QUEST. III. Of the Holy Scripture.

THE names given to it 18
 Why called a Testament 19
 How the want of a written word was supplied to the church before Moses 20
 Whether the church, under the Old Testament, understood the spiritual meaning of the laws contained in it 21
 Whether the prophets understood their own predictions ib.
 How far the Old Testament is still a rule 22
 How the scriptures are a compleat revelation of the will of God ib.
 The scripture a sufficient rule of faith and obedience 23
 Its properties as a rule 24
 It is the only rule ib.
 Human traditions of no divine authority ib.
 The Popish doctrine of them confuted 25
 The Canon of scripture preserved entire 27
 Is not perverted 28

QUEST. IV. Of the divine Authority of the Scriptures.

IN what respects called divine 28
 A divine revelation necessary 29
 Not contrary to God's perfections ib.
 Inspiration not impossible ib.
 The scripture proved to be the word of God 30
 From the majesty of its stile 31

From

The CONTENTS.

<i>From the purity of its doctrines</i>	Pag. 31	<i>Justice of God infinite</i>	Pag. 78
<i>Its holiness considered absolutely</i>	ib.	<i>How distinguished from his holiness</i>	ib.
<i>And as compared with other writings</i>	32	<i>Glory, how called a reward</i>	ib.
<i>From the harmony of all its parts</i>	33	<i>Afflictions of believers not properly a punishment</i>	79
<i>Its harmony shewn in the accomplishment of many predictions</i>	34	<i>Mercy and grace of God infinite</i>	80
<i>It doth not contradict it self</i>	35	<i>Difference between goodness, mercy, grace, and patience</i>	ib.
<i>Various objections answered</i>	36	<i>Mercy is either common or special</i>	81
<i>Rules for reconciling seeming contradictions in scripture</i>	39	<i>Grace free and sovereign</i>	ib.
<i>From its scope and design</i>	41	<i>Discriminating. Instances of it.</i>	<i>Afflictions</i>
<i>From the character of the penmen</i>	42	<i>not inconsistent with it</i>	83
<i>These were faithful</i>	ib.	<i>Leads not to licentiousness</i>	ib.
<i>They were not imposed on</i>	44	<i>Patience of God, what it is</i>	84
<i>How they might know they were under inspiration</i>	45	<i>Whether devils are objects of it</i>	ib.
<i>They mistook not the devil's impressions for divine revelation</i>	46	<i>Instances of God's patience</i>	85
<i>The words as well as matter of scripture were given by inspiration</i>	47	<i>Wherein manifested to the wicked</i>	86
<i>From its antiquity and preservation</i>	48	<i>Not inconsistent with justice</i>	87
<i>From the testimony of God by miracles</i>	ib.	<i>How to be improved</i>	88
<i>Two objections answered</i>	49	<i>By whom it is abused</i>	89
<i>By the conviction and conversion of sinners</i>	50	<i>Truth, God is abundant therein</i>	90
<i>How Christians come to a full persuasion of the divinity of scripture</i>	51	<i>How he is called a God of truth</i>	ib.
<i>The inward testimony of the Spirit explained</i>	ib.	<i>Faithfulness of God, 91. No impeachment hereof that some threatnings have not been executed, ib. Nor that some promises have not presently been performed</i>	92
		<i>How this perfection is to be improved</i>	93
 QUEST. V, VI. The principal matters contained in scripture	 52	 QUEST. VIII. Of the Unity of the Godhead	 94
 QUEST. VII. Of the nature and perfections of God	 53	 HOW God is styled the living God	95
HOW we may conceive aright of the divine perfections	ib.	<i>Unity of the Godhead proved</i>	96
<i>Of the communicable and incommunicable perfections of God</i>	54	<i>Was not denied by the wiser Heathen</i>	97
<i>Nothing common between God and the creature</i>	ib.	<i>Inferences from it</i>	98
<i>God is a Spirit; what a Spirit is</i>	ib.	<i>How we should conceive of it</i>	99
<i>Difference between other spiritual substances and God</i>	55	<i>Different modes used in speaking of the perfections of God</i>	100
<i>Independent. Infinitely perfect</i>	56	 QUEST. IX, X, XI. Of the doctrine of the Trinity	 100
<i>All-sufficient, ib. When this perfection is in effect denied</i>	57	THIS doctrine is of the highest importance	101
<i>Eternal, 58. His eternal duration not successive. How the parts of time are attributed to God</i>	ib.	<i>How to determine the importance of a doctrine</i>	ib.
<i>Immutable. When immutability is a perfection. How peculiar to God, 61. Arguments to prove him so</i>	62	<i>What knowledge of it necessary to salvation</i>	102
<i>Incomprehensible</i>	63	<i>It is a great mystery, 103. What a mystery is</i>	ib.
<i>Omnipresent and Almighty</i>	64	<i>It is incomprehensible</i>	104
<i>Wherein his power appears</i>	65	<i>Objections on this account answered</i>	105
<i>What things God cannot do</i>	66	<i>Whether to receive it be to use words without ideas</i>	ib.
<i>The improvement of his power</i>	67	<i>Whether the revelation of it be unintelligible</i>	106
<i>Omniscient, ib. He knows all future contingencies, 69. Properties of God's knowledge, ib.</i>	ib.	<i>Whether that which is unintelligible be the object of faith</i>	ib.
<i>Its improvement, 70. When it is practically denied</i>	ib.	<i>How this doctrine promotes religion</i>	107
<i>Wisdom of God infinite</i>		<i>In what sense revelation is an improvement of the light of nature</i>	ib.
<i>Different from knowledge</i>	71	<i>Not contrary to reason, though above it</i>	108
<i>Wherein it appears</i>	72	<i>When a doctrine is contrary to reason</i>	ib.
<i>In deferring the coming of Christ</i>	73	<i>It is not chargeable with Tritheism</i>	109
<i>In the constant government of the church</i>	74	<i>The use of reason in proving doctrines of pure revelation</i>	110
<i>Inferences from God's wisdom</i>	ib.	<i>It cannot be known by the light of nature</i>	
<i>Holiness of God infinite</i>	75	<i>How it was made known to Adam</i>	111
<i>What it is, ib. Instances of it</i>	ib.	<i>Whether the Heathen knew it</i>	ib.
<i>His suffering the entrance of sin, was no reflection on it</i>	76	<i>Trinity, not to be illustrated by similitudes</i>	112
<i>'Tis the standard of doctrines</i>	ib.	<i>Rules for interpreting scriptures relating to it</i>	ib.
<i>Protestant religion excels the Popish herein</i>	ib.	<i>The word Trinity explain'd</i>	114
<i>Instances of Popish doctrines which lead to licentiousness</i>	ib.	<i>Person, the word explain'd</i>	115
<i>When God's holiness is contemned</i>	77	<i>The difference between divine and human persons</i>	116
		<i>Sacred Three in what respect One</i>	117
		<i>How their glory equal, how the same</i>	ib.
		<i>Personality of the Son, ib. Of the Spirit</i>	118
		<i>Not metaphorically ascribed to either</i>	120
		<i>Eternal</i>	

The CONTENTS.

<i>Eternal generation of the Son, how understood by many</i>	Pag. 121	<i>The general method laid down</i>	Pag. 209
<i>Another method of accounting for it</i>	123	<i>In what sense God fore-ordain'd all things</i>	207
<i>This account thereof proved</i>	124	<i>That he did so, proved</i>	208
<i>Scriptures relating to Christ's sonship explain'd</i>	126	<i>Purpose of God free, wise, holy</i>	210
<i>Christ's sonship, as Mediator, consider'd</i>	127	<i>How it renders salvation necessary</i>	242
<i>Farther explain'd</i>	128	<i>It is unchangeable</i>	243
<i>The proofs of it</i>	129	<i>Repentance, how ascribed to God</i>	241
<i>Objections against this doctrine answered</i>	130	<i>Predestination, the word explain'd</i>	211
<i>Procession of the Spirit, how understood by many,</i>		<i>Consequences of denying it</i>	250
<i>122. What it is</i>	125	<i>Election, the word explained</i>	211
<i>The scripture doctrine of it</i>	131	<i>How used in the Old Testament</i>	214
<i>Oeconomy of the sacred Three explain'd</i>	132	<i>How in the New</i>	215
<i>How distinct works are ascribed to them</i>	133	<i>Fathers, their sense about this doctrine</i>	255
<i>The Deity of the Son proved</i>		<i>Election to salvation asserted in scripture</i>	216
<i>From his divine names</i>	134	<i>Churches, how styled elect</i>	217
<i>Jehovah God's incommunicable name</i>	135	<i>Chosen, part of mankind were so</i>	219
<i>Never given to creatures</i>	136	<i>These styled a Remnant</i>	220
<i>It is not applied to angels</i>	138	<i>A Remnant chosen out of the Jews</i>	221
<i>Christ's Deity proved from it</i>	139	<i>Men elected to sanctification, as well as salva-</i>	227
<i>God and Lord, how applied in scripture</i>	142	<i>tion</i>	227
<i>Christ's Deity proved thereby</i>	143	<i>Acts xiii. 48. explained and defended</i>	229
<i>This argued from 1 Tim. iii. 16.</i>	144	<i>Men chosen in Christ</i>	231
<i>And from Acts xx. 28. ib. Rom. ix. 5.</i>	145	<i>Supra-lapsarian and Sub-lapsarian schemes differ</i>	218
<i>From 1 John v. 20. 146. Isai. ix. 8.</i>	147		
<i>From Titus ii. 13. ib. John xx. 28.</i>	148	<i>Proofs of the doctrine of Election</i>	
<i>When the word God is used absolutely</i>	149	<i>from God's fore-knowledge</i>	222
<i>Its meaning when so used</i>	150	<i>from his giving the means of grace</i>	223
<i>In what sense Christ is stil'd God by the Socinians</i>	151	<i>Jacob loved, Esau hated, explained</i>	224
<i>From the ascription of the divine nature to him, in</i>		<i>Objections answered</i>	226
<i>Col. ii. 9.</i>	152	<i>The opposite doctrine, how defended</i>	251
<i>In Philip. ii. 6. this explained and defended</i>	153	<i>Properties of Election</i>	232
<i>Genuineness of 1 John v. 7. defended</i>	154	<i>Misrepresentations of it answered</i>	230
<i>From his conference with the Jews</i>	156	<i>Reprobation, how to be explained</i>	243
<i>From his Attributes</i>		<i>Preterition a branch of it</i>	244
<i>Eternity, 161. Immutability</i>	162	<i>Predamnation consider'd from Jude, Ver. 4.</i>	245
<i>Omnipresence</i>	163	<i>Rom. ix. 22. Chap. xi. 7—10. explained</i>	246
<i>This proved from John iii. 13.</i>	164	<i>2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Psal. lxxxii. 12. John xii.</i>	
<i>Omniscience, 165. Objections answered</i>	166	<i>39, 40. explained</i>	247
<i>Omnipotency</i>	167	<i>Wicked, how made for the day of evil</i>	248
<i>From his glorious titles</i>	169	<i>Will of God secret and revealed</i>	233
<i>From his work of creation</i>	170	<i>Is free, sovereign, and unconditional</i>	236
<i>The Socinian account thereof</i>	171	<i>Its absoluteness</i>	237
<i>Christ no instrument in creation</i>	172	<i>That it is conditional, cannot be proved from</i>	239
<i>How the Father made the world by him</i>	173	<i>scripture</i>	239
<i>Men only moral instruments in miracles</i>	174	<i>Conditional propositions, how understood there</i>	238
<i>From his works of providence</i>	175	<i>How God will have all saved</i>	252
<i>Christ the Governor of all things</i>	176	<i>Expectation of God not disappointed by the will of</i>	253
<i>From his acting as Judge</i>	177	<i>man</i>	253
<i>Subserviency of his kingdom to the Father</i>	178	<i>God not really disappointed, grieved, or resisted</i>	254
<i>Christ as Mediator below, yet equal with the</i>			
<i>Father</i>	179	<i>Bounds of life fixed by him</i>	256
<i>Inferiority of Christ, how to be understood in scrip-</i>		<i>Stipical fate, how it differs from God's decrees</i>	260
<i>ture</i>	180	<i>Objections against Election answered</i>	261
<i>From the worship paid him</i>	181	<i>Practical improvement of it</i>	267
<i>Christ the Object of religious worship</i>	182		
<i>From Baptism</i>	184	QUEST. XIV, XV. Of the work of	
<i>From the doxologies applied to him</i>	186	creation.	
<i>Anti-Trinitarians differ about the worship due to</i>			
<i>Christ</i>	187	CREATION, the word explained	269
<i>Right to divine worship is incommunicable</i>	188	<i>It was not from eternity</i>	270
<i>Objections against the deity of Christ answer'd</i>	189	<i>This proved from the invention of things</i>	273
		<i>By the power and for the glory of God</i>	274
<i>Of the divinity of the Holy Ghost</i>	192	<i>Performed in six days</i>	275
<i>His divinity proved</i>		<i>Each day's work</i>	277
<i>From Acts v. 3, 4.</i>	193	<i>Of instantaneous production</i>	276
<i>From his divine Attributes</i>	195	<i>The condition and season of the year in which</i>	
<i>From his divine works</i>	196	<i>things were created</i>	280
<i>Such works performed by him</i>	197	<i>Antiquity of nations vainly boasted of</i>	272
<i>From the worship given to him</i>	198		
<i>Objections answered</i>	199	QUEST. XVI. Of Angels	280
<i>Practical inferences from the doctrine of the</i>			
<i>Trinity</i>	202	<i>Of their existence</i>	281
QUEST. XII, XIII. Of God's decrees	203	<i>Nature and properties</i>	282
<i>SOME things premised in general</i>	204	<i>Work and employment</i>	283
<i>Dissuasives from prejudices</i>	205	<i>Worship: Harmony therein; but no Hierarchy</i>	284
		<i>How</i>	

The CONTENTS.

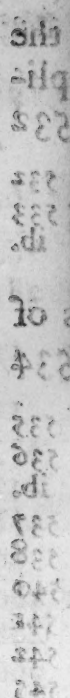
How they impart their Ideas to one another	Pag. 285	Original righteousness lost	Pag. 336
QUEST. XVII. Of the creation of man	285	Man's nature inclined to sin	337
MAN was created male and female	286	Propensity to sin not put into our nature by God	338
Excellency of his make	289	Not harmless even in childhood	ib.
Of God's image in man	291	Origin of moral evil	338
No men before Adam	287	The notion of two first causes exploded	ib.
QUEST. XVIII. Of Providence.		Pre-existence of souls a mere fancy	339
Providence governs all creatures	293	Corruption of nature not by the soul's transduction	340
And all their actions	ib.	Not from imitation	ib.
Its concern for man	295	Necessarily ensues on the privation of original righteousness	342
How conversant about evil actions	296	QUEST. XXVII. Of man's misery by the fall	345
Sin over-ruled for God's glory, and his people's good	298	Various opinions about the salvation of infants	346
Other things over-ruled by providence	299	Punishment of original sin increased by actual	348
Objections against providence answered	300	Sinners liable to God's wrath and curse	349
Unequal distributions of providence vindicated	301	Slaves to Satan	ib.
QUEST. XIX. Of God's providence towards the angels	302	QUEST. XXVIII, XXIX. Of the punishment of sin in both worlds	350
HOW it was conversant about the fall of apostate angels	303	Of judicial blindness of mind	351
These fell all at once	304	Hardness of heart	352
Some angels confirmed in holiness and happiness	305	Sins that lead to it	353
Ministry of angels	306	Difference between the hardness found in believers and judicial	ib.
QUEST. XX. Of God's providence towards man in innocency	307	Of strong delusions	351
OF Paradise		A reprobate sense	352
Man's secular employment and food therein	308	Vile affections	354
His dominion over the creatures	309	Horror of conscience. When judicial	355
His spiritual concerns were under the direction of providence	310	Punishment of sin in outward things	356
Sabbath instituted and the covenant established	311	In the world to come	357
Difference between a law and a covenant	312	QUEST. XXX. Of man's recovery	358
Adam was under a covenant	313	GOD's love the only moving cause of it	360
Objections answered	315	Covenant of grace. Its various periods	362
Conditions of that covenant	316	Opposed to that of innocency	361
Tree of life a seal of it	318	QUEST. XXXI. The covenant of grace made with Christ, and, in him, with the elect	362
Of the tree of knowledge	319	Covenant, scriptural sense of the word	363
QUEST. XXI. Of the fall of man	320	Between the Father and Son, explained	365
OUR first parents were endued with freedom of will	320	And proved	366
Were left thereunto	321	Of redemption distinguished by some from the covenant of grace	369
How they were tempted	322	God's covenant differs from human	364
Satan's subtilty in the temptation	324	How he covenants with man	371
Aggravations of their sin	327	How man covenants with him	372
Its immediate consequences	326	QUEST. XXXII. Of the grace manifested in the second covenant	373
QUEST. XXII. All mankind fell in Adam	328	Conditions of a covenant, how understood	376
ADAM a federal head	329	Meritorious performed by Christ	378
All fell in him, except Christ	331	Conditional promises uncertain	377
His sin imputed to his posterity	332	Interest in Christ, what meant by it	375
Penal evils which followed	330	Grace glorified, in ordaining, promising, and working faith	379
Appointment of his headship vindicated	333	Other graces promised and connected with salvation	378
QUEST. XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI. Of Sin	334	QUEST. XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXV. Of the various dispensations of the covenant of grace	380
Original sin	335	CHRIST revealed of old by promises and prophecies	381
Actual transgressions proceed from it	344	Ceremo-	
Conveyed by natural generation	343		

The CONTENTS.

<i>Ceremonial law typified Christ and the gospel</i>	Pag. 382	<i>He offer'd himself,</i>	Pag. 433
<i>Types. Cautions about them</i>	383	<i>by the Spirit</i>	ib.
<i>Rules how to judge of them</i>	384	<i>without spot to God</i>	434
<i>How the Jews knew their meaning</i>	385	<i>Not for all men</i>	ib.
<i>Cocceius's sentiments about the bondage and darkness of that dispensation</i>	387	<i>but for his sheep and friends</i>	436
<i>Gospel-dispensation, when it began</i>	388	<i>and for his church</i>	ib.
<i>How it excels the Legal</i>	389	<i>This evidenc'd</i>	437
QUEST. XXXVI, XXXVII. Of the Mediator of the covenant of grace	390	<i>by his love to it</i>	ib.
<i>Saints and Angels no Mediators</i>	392	<i>his propriety in it</i>	438
<i>Christ the only Mediator</i>	391	<i>and saving it</i>	439
<i>Two distinct natures in Christ, but not two Persons</i>	394	<i>Objections answered</i>	440
<i>His human nature was united to his Person</i>	393	<i>Christ purchased grace and glory</i>	441
<i>It shall continue so for ever</i>	401	<i>Universal redemption,</i>	442
<i>How formed like ours. How not</i>	397	<i>its consequences</i>	443
<i>It was formed of the Virgin</i>	398	<i>Arguments for it consider'd</i>	444
<i>His body was truly human</i>	395	<i>Texts urged for it explained</i>	445
<i>His soul distinct from his deity</i>	396	<i>How the word All, &c. is to be explained</i>	448
<i>He was expected by the Jews, and</i>		<i>Special Redemption,</i>	
<i>Born in the fulness of time</i>	399	<i>consistent with the covenant of grace</i>	441
<i>What meant thereby</i>	400	<i>and with preaching the gospel</i>	443
		<i>It advances grace more than general does</i>	446
		<i>It leads not to despair</i>	442
		<i>Whether it be contrary to scripture</i>	447
		<i>Christ intercedes not for all</i>	438
		<i>Divine expostulations explained</i>	444
		<i>How all should repent and believe, though Christ died not for all</i>	445
QUEST. XXXVIII, XXXIX, XL. Of the necessity of the Mediator's having two natures	401	QUEST. XLV. Of Christ's kingly office	453
<i>WHY he should be God</i>	402	<i>AS respecting his subjects</i>	
<i>Why man</i>	404	<i>What they were before subdued</i>	454
<i>Why both God and man</i>	406	<i>How brought into subjection</i>	455
QUEST. XLI, XLII. Of the Mediator's name and offices	407	<i>How their subjection express'd at first</i>	457
<i>WHY he was called Jesus</i>	ib.	<i>Their behaviour and conflicts</i>	458
<i>Why he was called Christ</i>	408	<i>How Christ deals with them</i>	459
<i>His offices distinguished, but not divided</i>	411	<i>As respecting his enemies</i>	460
<i>He was set apart and authorized to execute them</i>	409	<i>He govern'd the church before and since his incarnation</i>	461
<i>He was fitly qualified for them</i>	410	<i>This office executed by him in glory</i>	462
QUEST. XLIII. Of Christ's prophetic office	412	Of the MILLENNIUM.	
<i>HE reveals the will of God</i>	413	<i>Various opinions about it</i>	463
<i>He was qualified for it</i>	ib.	<i>Some have gross Ideas of it</i>	465
<i>He does it in various ages</i>	415	<i>What shall precede or attend it</i>	464
<i>To whom and how he does it</i>	414	<i>Gospel shall then be more spread</i>	469
QUEST. XLIV. Of Christ's priestly office	416	<i>How this doctrine to be treated</i>	466
<i>PRIESTHOOD of Christ and Aaron compared</i>	417	<i>In what respects it is to be allowed</i>	467
<i>Typified by Melchizedek</i>	419	<i>Some prophecies of the call of the Jews not yet fulfilled</i>	468
<i>Various opinions who Melchizedek was</i>	420	<i>Why Christ shall not reign visibly in his human nature</i>	470
<i>Proved that he was Christ</i>	421	<i>Temple-service not to be revived</i>	471
<i>Objections answered</i>	422	<i>Gospel-ordinances shall be continued</i>	ib.
<i>Satisfaction demanded for sin, of what value and kind</i>	423	<i>First resurrection; how understood by some</i>	472
<i>Of Christ was necessary</i>	423	<i>Its literal sense debated</i>	473
<i>His active obedience a part of it</i>	427	<i>General conflagration</i>	475
<i>Least degree of his sufferings not sufficient for it</i>	426	<i>New heavens and new earth</i>	ib.
<i>No redemption without price</i>	429	<i>Resurrection of the church sometimes taken mystically</i>	476
<i>Death of Christ a ransom</i>	431	<i>1000 years how understood by some</i>	477
<i>Confirmation of his doctrine not its principal end</i>	432	<i>These not yet begun</i>	ib.
<i>Christ died in our stead</i>	430	<i>Mediatorial kingdom of Christ eternal</i>	478
<i>Objections answered</i>	ib.	<i>1 Cor. xv. Ver. 24, 25, 28. explained</i>	479
		QUEST. XLVI, XLVII, XLVIII. Of Christ's humiliation	480
		<i>THIS shewn in his birth and infancy</i>	481
		<i>In his parentage</i>	482
		<i>In the place of his birth and abode</i>	ib.
		<i>In the sinless infirmities of his life</i>	494
		<i>In his being made under the law</i>	483
		<i>In his being exposed to indignities</i>	484

The CONTENTS.

<i>Temptations endured by him</i>	485	QUEST. LVII, LVIII, LIX. Of the	
<i>General remarks on them</i>	487	<i>benefits of redemption, and the appli-</i>	
<i>The time and place thereof</i>	488	<i>cation thereof</i>	Page 532
<i>His first temptation</i>	489	<i>Benefits procured by Christ</i>	532
<i>His second temptation</i>	490	<i>These applied by the Holy Ghost</i>	533
<i>His matter explained</i>	492	<i>To all for whom they were purchased</i>	ib.
<i>His third temptation</i>	493		
<i>What to be observed therein</i>		QUEST. LX. Of the disadvantages of	
QUEST. XLIX, L. Of Christ's humili-		<i>those who never hear the gospel.</i>	534
<i>ation before and after his death</i>	495		
CHRIST betray'd by Judas	496	STATE of the Heathen consider'd	535
<i>Forsaken by his disciples</i>	ib.	<i>No salvation without the gospel</i>	536
<i>Denied by Peter</i>	497	<i>Nor without faith in Christ</i>	ib.
<i>Scorned by the world</i>	ib.	<i>Deists; falseness of their hope set forth</i>	537
<i>Reviled by many</i>	498	<i>False grounds of hope in others</i>	538
<i>Inference</i>	ib.	<i>Salvation in none but Christ</i>	540
<i>Prosecuted by the Jews</i>	499	<i>This proved</i>	541
<i>Condemned by Pilate</i>	ib.	<i>Objections answer'd</i>	542
<i>Tormented by his persecutors</i>	500	<i>Christ the Saviour only of his Body the church</i>	545
<i>Bore the wrath of God</i>	ib.		
<i>Death of the cross cruel and painful</i>	501	QUEST. LXI, LXII, LXIII, LXIV. Of	
<i>Shameful, servile, and cursed</i>	502	<i>the church, visible and invisible</i>	546
<i>Christ buried with respect by his friends</i>	503	Church, the word how used	547
<i>Was under the power of death till the third day</i>	504	<i>Places of worship so termed</i>	548
<i>Of his descent into hell</i>	505	<i>Their first erection</i>	ib.
<i>How the Papists understand it</i>	506	<i>Its distinction into visible and invisible</i>	549
		<i>Invisible church described</i>	550
QUEST. LI, LII. Of Christ's resur-		<i>This farther explained and defended</i>	551
<i>rection and exaltation</i>	507	<i>Visible church described</i>	552
		<i>In what respects 'tis one</i>	553
R esurrection of Christ proved	508	<i>In what respects 'tis not one</i>	ib.
<i>By credible witnesses</i>	509	<i>Its concern for the children of its members</i>	554
<i>They were men of integrity</i>	510	<i>Jewish church, its establishment</i>	555
<i>By the conduct of his enemies</i>	511	<i>Its government</i>	ib.
<i>By miracles</i>	512	<i>How they promoted religion in their synagogues</i>	556
<i>Properties of his risen body</i>	ib.	<i>Their Proseucha, or places appointed for prayer</i>	557
<i>Christ raised the third day</i>	513	<i>A particular gospel-church described</i>	560
<i>Reasons of it</i>	ib.	<i>Its matter</i>	561
<i>Was not three whole days and nights in the</i>		<i>Its form or bond of union</i>	ib.
<i>grave</i>	514	<i>Its subjection to Christ to be profess'd</i>	564
<i>Socinians account of Christ's resurrection</i>	515	<i>How this to be made visible</i>	ib.
<i>Christ's own and his peoples concern in his resur-</i>		<i>Its power of admission</i>	563
<i>rection</i>	516	<i>The reformed churches differ about this</i>	ib.
		<i>Terms of communion fixed by Christ</i>	ib.
QUEST. LIII, LIV. Of Christ's ascen-		<i>Its power of exclusion</i>	565
<i>tion</i>	517	<i>Causes of exclusion</i>	566
		<i>The way of proceeding therein</i>	567
I t was real and visible	520	<i>With what temper this should be done</i>	568
<i>Its necessity and design</i>	522	<i>What meant by being deliver'd to Satan</i>	569
<i>Its distance from the time of his resurrection</i>	517	<i>and for what end</i>	ib.
<i>How this interval was employ'd</i>	518	<i>The first preaching and success of the gospel</i>	558
<i>Matter of his conversation with his disciples</i>	519	<i>Conduct of the Apostles in planting gospel-churches</i>	559
<i>Remarks on what preceded it</i>	521	<i>Church-communion prov'd</i>	
<i>He ascended from mount Olivet</i>	520	<i>from the law of nature</i>	561
<i>Christ's sitting at the right hand of God</i>	523	<i>from scripture</i>	ib.
		<i>Government of churches by their officers</i>	570
QUEST. LV. Of Christ's interces-		<i>The office of a Pastor, Bishop, or Elder</i>	571
<i>tion</i>	524	<i>Bishops and Elders the same</i>	573
		<i>Pastors chosen by the church</i>	ib.
N ecessity of it	ib.	<i>How to be set apart</i>	574
<i>His fitness for it</i>	525	<i>How their office to be discharged</i>	575
<i>Manner of it</i>	527	<i>Whether a Teacher be a distinct officer</i>	577
<i>How it differs from our prayers</i>	526	<i>Synods, the abuse and advantage of them</i>	576
<i>What procured by it</i>	528	<i>Parishes, why churches were so called by ancient</i>	
<i>How to be improved</i>	ib.	<i>writers</i>	572
		<i>The office of a Deacon</i>	578
QUEST. LVI. Of Christ's coming to		<i>Privileges of the visible church</i>	ib.
<i>judge the world</i>	529	<i>It is under Christ's special care</i>	ib.
		<i>Wherein this consists</i>	579
T he time of his appearance	530	<i>It is under Christ's special government</i>	ib.
<i>The glory that shall attend it</i>	531	<i>In what respects</i>	ib.
		<i>It enjoys communion of saints</i>	ib.
		<i>It has the ordinary means of grace</i>	580



20
242
747
84
S
247
077
577
577
277
J
477
277
J
277
277

Cha

2
3
4
5
6
8
9
14
15
17
18
M
19

INDEX of SCRIPTURES.

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	1 CHRONICLES.			PSALMS.			Pfal.	Ver.	Pag.
30	19	312	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Pfal.	Ver.	Pag.	99	8	88
32	34	69	14	17	448	2	6	178	100	2	4
	35		15	2	212		7	125	102	26	62
	36		21	12	36		8	368		27	
33	9	447	22	1		5	4		104	4	
	10	22	29	20			5	525		25	14
34	1	493	29	26		8	3			27	
							6			28	12
JOSHUA.			2 CHRONICLES.			16	2	56	105	8	477
5	14	182	9	39	26		2	365	110	1	142
	15		35	25	ib.		3				
10	13	26	36	9	40	19	4		111	5	59
JUDGES.			NEHEMIAH.				1	3	113	6	480
6	24	136	9	20	199	22	5	116	118	22	498
1 SAMUEL.			ESTHER.			24	6	497	119	122	366
9	19	557	1	15	170	25	9	522	123	2	478
10	5	ib.	4	6	514	27	10	538	133	2	408
	24	212	5	16		31	14	371	136	1-3	189
16	21	36		1		33	4	75		2	69
	22						19	538	139	7-10	196
17	55	ib.				40	6	172		23	196
23	12	68				45	9	368		24	
2 SAMUEL.			JOB.				14	143	145	15	14
1	18	26	8	9	53		15	552	148	16	
7	12-16	492	9	30	344	47	5	136		4	277
14	20	165	10	11	10	48	14	5	PROVERBS.		
16	10	296	11	7	63	50	21	84	1	23	199
19	22	479	14	4	343	51	5	343	2	17	351
23	3	194		5	257		16	418	8	22	126
24	13	36	15	14	343	55	23	257		23	409
	24	ib.	16	15	282	58	3	337		23	166
1 KINGS.			23	8	118	67	6	5		25	
3	14	257	25	2	175	68	18	522		30	
4	32	26	26	13	196					31	257
	33	ib.	27	5-7	479	69	24	126	10	27	
8	9	38	31	26	226	72	27	245	13	20	353
11	41	26		27		73	15	185	16	4	248
22	23	296	33	4	196		2	16	23	21	449
2 KINGS.			36	23	55	74	3	4	ECCLESIASTES.		
1	12	174	37	9	9	76	25	556	7	17	257
2	14	175		17	104	77	8	84	12	12	170
5	26	163	38	4	277	78	10	92	CANTICLES.		
				7			70	212	2	17	388
9	11	45		7	281	81	71	245	4	7	551
12	3	557	39	28	119	82	12		6	9	552
14	4			35		89	13	247	ISAIAH.		
15	4			12			22	65	1	2	550
22	8-11	25	41	11		90	14	241		11	425
24	8	40		21			17	60		13	84
				28		91	11	75		24	545
				3			12	488		2	87
				34		92	11	306		2	448
						94	12			4	253
							2	58		5	139
							9	63		5	176
							10				6

INDEX of SCRIPTURES.

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	HOSEA.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
6	8	195	60	19	466					3	2	405
	9	84		21	469					6	13	525
7	13	397		3	197	1	10	220		11	13	368
	14	138	61	5	407	2	21	8				523
	16	498	62	11	381	3	22	468				496
8	13	24	63	1	495		4	384				
	14	38	65	9	309		5	367				
	20	147		25		6	5	86				
9	6	249	JEREMIAH.				7	313				
	5	220				11	8	87				
10	6	482	1	6	58	12	8	354				
		469		8	78	14	3	432				
	22	140	5	9	61	JOEL.						
11	1	185	10	10	295	2	27	141				
	1	476	17	5	185		32	199				
	9	139	18	8	444	AMOS.						
	10	78	21	8	140	2	13	84				
26	14	257	23	6	393	3	2	90				
	19	366		5	64	7	14	43				
28	16	474		24	474	JONAH.						
30	11	298	29	5	366	1	5	485				
38	1	138	30	21	141	3	4	92				
	5	55	33	16	1260			241				
	14	56	36	3	474	MICAH.						
	15	69	37	7-13		4	1	467				
41	17	214	LAMENTATIONS.				2	448				
	26	15	3	33	87		5	126				
	8	135					7	160				
	9	84	EZEKIEL.				18	426				
	10	214	6	12	191		1	425				
	23	367	8	2	444	ZEPHANIAH.						
42	8	474	12	13	492	2	3	260				
	14	298	18	3	260		14	447				
	25	214	12-21	444			12	214				
43	1	372	20	37	371	HAGGAI.						
44	2	266	21	30	269	2	7	381				
	6	237	33	11	444							
	28	469	34	16	452	ZECHARIAH.						
45	5	367	23	384		1	12	391				
	17	368	24	367				405				
	21	482	37	1-12	476							
	33	484	48	21	474							
48	8	503	DANIEL.									
	9	368		35	208							
	4-6	438		9	60							
49	8	552		10	523							
	9	372		14	514							
50	5	413		26	388							
53	2	466		27								
	3											
	9											
	10											
	12											
54	5											
56	4											
	6											
60	1											
	1											
	11											
	18											

INDEX OF SCRIPTURES. I

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
24	22	214	4	1-13	485	5	26	136	16	26	526
24	24	215	6	20	556	28	158		27	526	
25	31	531	6	12	557	29	158		33	460	
26	34	40	8	36	40	30	178		17	133	
26	11	38	8	41	556	36	ib.		3	223	
26	52	160	9	49	177	44	498		24	5	
26	61	160	11	26	199	27	409		24	177	
26	64	128	11	13	65	33	452		18	26	497
26	63	498	11	20	157	51	540		26	38	
26	68	497	13	49	166	35-44	554		36	500	
27	69-72	499	13	3	237	53	212		19	17	508
27	19	498	13	6	253	70	133		20	12	509
27	28	498	15	28	347	39	199		15	129	
27	29	ib.	17	10	284	49	512		17	125	
27	42	486	19	5	176	58	127		28	148	
27	44	129	19	42	254	8	178		30	24	
27	54	511	22	29	178	10	159		21	17	165
28	65	ib.	22	42	367	8	400				
28	4	41	22	53	395	11	434				
28	19	183	23	26	501	14	159				
28	20	40	23	34	500	16	471				
			23	43	506	18	159				
			24	46	513	25	178				
			24	54	508	28	159				
			24	16	509	29	159				
			24	31	40	30	178				
			24	26	395	32	178				
			24	31	520	37	129				
			24	50-53	520	44	257				
						21	529				
						24	526				
						41	435				
						42	448				
						52	247				
						19	139				
						39	529				
						40	178				
						41	185				
						48	410				
						49	434				
						14	119				
						1	131				
						10	178				
						11	484				
						17	178				
						26	ib.				
						13-16	434				
						16	237				
						19	435				
						26	125				
						26	131				
						16	438				
						7	438				
						8	125				
						7	131				
						8	118				
						12	25				
						13	199				
						14	125				
						14	133				
						14	199				
						14	437				

MARK.

1	13	485
5	32	514
7	22	556
8	32	574
9	38	495
10	24	186
12	21	545
12	29	150
13	32	397
14	28	530
14	33-36	518
15	58	501
15	61	499
15	62	504
16	37	513
16	42	518
16	7	395
16	12	509
16	17	512
16	18	519
16	19	519

LUKE.

1	28	482
1	32	478
1	33	128
1	35	371
1	72	448
1	1	482
1	7	513
1	21	407
1	28-30	498
1	34	481
1	52	35
1	23	35
1	24	35

JOHN.

1	1	161
1	2	171
1	3	166
1	9	483
1	10	125
1	14	125
1	18	129
1	29	452
1	29	409
1	30	129
1	34	489
1	35	158
2	3-11	318
2	11	344
3	5	398
3	6	164
3	13	237
3	31	451
3	13	458
3	15	409
3	16	568
3	26	549
3	27-35	54
4	9	55
4	20	138
4	21	133
4	24	178
5	18	133
5	21	133
5	22	178

ACTS.

1	3	517
1	4	519
1	9	520
1	10	573
1	12	198
1	23	448
1	24	199
1	25	252
2	5	266
2	17	508
2	23	505
2	24	507
2	25	515
2	27	179
2	31	512
2	32	193
2	36	194
2	37	510
2	38	438
2	39	118
2	40	512
2	41	578
2	42	255
2	43	511
2	44	197
2	45	129
2	46	544
2	47	252
2	48	197
2	49	544
2	50	545
2	51	199
2	52	448
2	53	197
2	54	119
2	55	86
2	56	228
2	57	85
2	58	244
2	59	541
2	60	14

INDEX of SCRIPTURES.

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
14	23	573
15	18	68
	28	150
16	6	119
	6	ib.
	7	
	9	197
	10	
	13	557
17	23	97
	26	257
		448
	27	543
	30	244
		541
	31	178
19	2	133
		199
	32	
	39	547
	41	
20	17	571
	23	119
		119
	28	144
		197
		571
	35	25
28	20	169

ROMANS.

4	515
8	448
19	542
20	65
21	12
25	ib.
28	354
2	2
	91
	4
	542
14	72
15	542
28	562
29	562
3	1
	2
	40
	25
	232
4	6
	387
5	8-11
	436
	10
	442
	12
	330
	14
	329
	18
	330
	19
	428
6	2
	451
	4
	371
	8
	451
	9
	504
7	7
	31
8	3
	331
	3
	314
	4

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
8	10	92
	16	133
	20-22	355
	21-23	474
	26	134
		199
	27	405
		223
	29	228
	30	541
		125
	32	378
		437
	33	216
		455
	34	516
9	1	119
		183
	3	6
	4	361
	5	145
	6	562
	6	215
	7	
	8	220
	11-13	224
	12	449
	15	468
	18	244
	22	246
	23	227
	23	220
	24	
	25	468
10	9	237
	13	141
	13	540
	14	570
	15	522
11	2	
	2	215
	5	
	7	220
	5	244
	7-10	246
	17	1
	19	222
	22	
	24	471
	29	63
		431
14	9	515
		22
15	4	11
	13	379
16	26	71
	27	

1 CORINTHIANS.

1	12-16	184
	13	430
	20	542
	21	
	21	414

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
1	30	133
		202
2	8	483
	10	196
3	14	78
	16	195
	22	373
5	3	64
	5	569
		318
	7	432
	9	26
6	13	308
	19	119
8	3	223
9	19	448
	27	243
10	2	190
	8	37
	11	22
11	18	
	20	547
	22	
12	4-6	196
	10	49
	11	197
	28	553
		578
14	32	49
15	8	510
	22	450
	24	
	25	478
	28	
	37, 38	512
	45-49	329
	50	470
	51	103
	52	531

2 CORINTHIANS.

1	3	129
		538
	8	500
	20	541
	13	21
	14	ib.
	18	195
4	13	379
5	13	
	14	451
	15	
	16	470
	18	132
	19	538
	19	432
	21	26
7	8	
8	5	560
	23	
11	4	37
13	5	243
		186
	14	198

GALATIANS.

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
1	4	431
	8	37
2	16	40
	20	129
		371
		483
3	13	502
	19	374
	27	184
	29	
4	1	23
	3	ib.
	4	399
		130
	5	314
		437
	6	125
5	2	40
	22	
	23	379
6	6	577

EPHESIANS.

1	3	216
		438
		228
	4	231
	4	132
	5	215
	10	435
	11	207
2	3	348
	5	516
	6	371
		96
	12	361
		202
	18	540
	20	560
3	8	103
	9	
	9	173
	10	62
	20	57
4	4-6	553
		462
	8	519
		522
		523
	10	520
	11	577
	30	255
5	23	436
	25	438
	27	186
	27	552
6	12	281

PHILIPPIANS.

2	6	152
		395
	7	480
		2

INDEX of SCRIPTURES.

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
2	8	501
3	21	167
4	19	57
		148

COLOSSIANS.

1	13	129
	15	124
	16	171
	17	175
	18	126
	24	431
	26	103
2	3	103
	9	152
	11	318
	12	371
	15	506
	20	451
3	1	371
	3	451
	3	551
	10	291
4	16	26

1 THESSALONIANS.

1	3	216
	4	129
	5	198
3	12	474
	13	531
4	16	

2 THESSALONIANS.

1	6	78
	7	177
	9	351
2	11	247
	12	228
	13	216
	14	5
	15	198
3	5	

1 TIMOTHY.

1	14	176
	17	62
	17	183
2	4	251
	14	321
3	2	578
	13	144
	16	312
4	8	

4	10	453
5	1	571
	17	570
	21	213
	21	305
6	9	460
	13	160
	15	186
	16	61
	20	25

2 TIMOTHY.

1	10	315
	12	185
2	19	222
	25	260
4	8	78
	22	186

TITUS.

1	5	559
2	9	449
	11	452
	13	147
	14	431
	14	436
3	6	437
	10	566
	11	

HEBREWS.

1	22	173
	22	126
	3	175
	3	524
	5	126
	6	188
2	9	450
	10	161
	8	123
	14	460
	14	501
	14	506
3	3	144
	4	129
	6	129
4	14	484
	15	130
5	8	243
6	8	523
	20	419
7	21	529
	25	520
	26	523
8	1	38
9	4	315
	8	545
	9	

9	14	195
	14	433
	24	519
	24	522
	28	432
	28	433
10	1	21
	14	418
12	2	502
	2	176
	3	540
	16	226
	22	389
	23	
	25	415
	26	
13	8	162

JAMES.

1	2	559
	3	228
2	5	52
	17	
	18	40
	24	

1 PETER.

1	2	217
	2	222
	10	21
	20	59
2	5	528
	6	139
	8	415
	10	515
	18	257
	20	383
	21	

2 PETER.

1	41	290
	161	510
2	5	20
	8	60
	9	251
	10	474
	13	
	13	

1 JOHN.

1	3	578
2	2	449
3	15	15
4	8	14
	7	114
	7	154
	19	449
	20	146

Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
2	1	212

JUDE.

4	243
4	245
6	84
14	20
15	20
20	560
21	538
21	560
21	186
24	
25	

REVELATION.

4	60
5	126
5	176
8	167
11	168
2	178
3	85
21	455
4	60
5	391
9	336
10	467
11-13	183
10	169
3	391
7	475
11	467
15	467
17	94
16	449
3	168
4	75
4	169
6	168
14	143
14	467
7	467
8	468
4	475
5	467
6	472
7	475
23	472
8	138
13	168